

THE REF³

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&
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A NOTE ABOUT THE SCRIPT

LIKE THE SCREWBALL COMEDIES OF YORE, IT SHOULD BE ASSUMED BY READER AND PLAYER ALIKE THAT THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCRIPT REQUIRES, FOR THE MOST PART, A FAST PACED DELIVERY...

YOU WILL FIND CERTAIN LINES OF DIALOGUE ARE UNDERLINED. THIS INDICATES THAT THE CUE FOR THE NEXT PLAYER'S LINE STARTS AT THE BEGINING OF THE UNDERLINE, NOT AT THE END OF LINE - SO THAT THE TWO WILL OVERLAP - (as is customary in arguements).

THANK YOU

ON THE SOUNDTRACK, WE HEAR; JUDY GARLAND SINGING "HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS" AS THE OPENING CREDITS ROLL:

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET, OLD SAYBROOK CONNECTICUT - EARLY EVENING.

Dusky blue and pink clouds streak the winter sky. Adorable little brick buildings studded with twinkling lights and frosted with snow, look cozy and inviting. Shoppers and their children do their last minute shopping with happy suburban smiles as they pass their neighbors and shout friendly holiday greetings. In the town square stands a EIGHT FOOT COMMUNITY DECORATED SNOWMAN. A picture perfect Christmas card town.

SUPER: CHRISTMAS EVE ; 5:03 PM

CAMERA TRACKS IN to a Neo-Classical professional building, and past a sign that reads DR. WONG MARITAL COUNSELOR;

FADE INTO;

INT. DR. WONG'S OFFICE - EVENING.

C.U. of A SNOW DOME PAPER WEIGHT - enclosed in glass is a miniature town that looks just like our opening shot; a picture perfect town with tiny snow flakes all around.

The Dome is sitting in the lap of a WOMAN, who fidgets with it; tapping her giant wedding ring against it's glass and scrapping her nails anxiously , as we hear her speak O.S.;

CAROLINE (O.S.)

I sometimes fantasize about killing him.

DR. WONG (O.S.)

Tell me about that.

Camera pans up to; CAROLINE CHASSEUR; 41, classical attractive. Great skin, great bone structure. She is speaking to Dr Wong who is O.S. Her voice is deadpan, as if on the edge of a breakdown

CAROLINE

It's usually when we argue. Not when we fight - he'll yell in a fight and that's when I know I've put a crack in him. But until that point, Lloyd has this annoying habit of arguing without raising his voice. He even (mimics a calm voice) says he's not arguing. He's just "trying to understand". He talks in

CAROLINE

this really peaceful voice...as if he's the only normal person in the room, and I'm a mental patient he has to keep calm until the doctors come. I was a little upset that my mother decided to go to Europe instead of coming to us for Christmas. Lloyd says "it's better that way"... since his mother is coming and they don't get along. And I said thanks a lot for caring about my feelings and he said "the world doesn't revolve around your feelings Caroline" and I said 'at least I have feelings you fucking Romulyn android' and I threw a plate at him and he said in this painfully gentle voice, "Is all this drama necessary Caroline?". And I looked him and thought, 'no...what is necessary is that you must die.. Not gently - you must die while losing an argument. And as you writhe on the floor clutching your heart, the last words you'll hear will be mine - "Lloyd, is all this drama necessary"?'

DR. WONG, a benevolent therapist, nods. Behind him hang diplomas.

WONG

Mmmm...Lloyd, would you share a fantasy?

LLOYD CHASSEUR; 42, a cool intelligent handsome face with dark curly hair. He acts cool detached, conversational;

LLOYD

Well, I don't really have fantasies although I sometimes think it would be nice if I were deaf.

WONG

All right, now both of you, close your eyes... Now connect with that Inner Child, and ask that child to complete this sentence - "What I'm feeling in this moment is...."

Caroline replaces the SNOW DOME on Wong's desk, closing her eyes;

CAROLINE

What I'm feeling in this moment is upset because I don't think I have an Inner Child.

WONG

Lloyd?

LLOYD

Maybe she can adopt.

CAROLINE

(opens her eyes)

SEE! ALL YOU GET IS SARCASM!

HE'S NEVER COMMUNICA....!

WONG HITS A LITTLE DESK BELL and CAROLINE IMMEDIATELY STOPS.

WONG

No arguing today. We made that commitment.

Lloyd looks at the bell with great interest.

LLOYD

Do they sell these to anybody?

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOW COVERED MANSION - EVENING.

SOUNDTRACK PLAYS; BURL IVES singing "HAVE A HOLLY, JOLLY XMAS".

SUPER; 5:10 PM

INT. MANSION - EVENING

C.U. - A LATEX-GLOVED HAND HOVERING over a RED-LIGHTED BURGLAR ALARM SYSTEM. It holds a syringe between it's thumb, index and middle fingers. The hand inserts the syringe into the alarm with the precision of an acupuncturist and slowly squeezes it's contents into the alarm. THE RED LIGHT GOES OFF. The hand removes the syringe and replaces it in a black fanny pack around his hips, and extracts a hooked, dental instrument. He inserts it into the front door lock and, with a tiny flick of the wrist, unlocks the door and enters. A LASER BEAM of light crossing the doorways entrance. The Thief stops. He removes TWO SMALL MIRRORS. He slides one into the beam facing the right side. Then slides another into the beam, facing the left side. While the beams reflect and maintain their current - A SPACE is created in between the two mirrors where no beam exists. The Thief steps nimbly through.

CUT TO:

INT. WONG'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING.

WONG

In this exercise, each of you will

WONG

have a moment to share something. During that time the other will not speak. Practice listening - don't sit there thinking of what you're going to say next. Who would like to go first?

CAROLINE

I had this crazy dream.

LLOYD

Do we have to do dreams?

Wong says hold his finger up to his lips. Caroline continues;

CAROLINE

I was at this fancy restaurant having lunch, and the waiter brought me my entree. It was a salad - it was Lloyd's head on a plate of Romaine with his penis sticking out of his ear. And I said, "I didn't order this". And the waiter said, "You must try it, it's a delicacy. But don't eat the penis, it's just garnish".

WONG

Lloyd, what do you think about the dream?

LLOYD

(starting to get annoyed)
I think she should stop telling it at dinner parties to all our friends. I mean, don't you think dreams are private?

WONG

I'm not here to judge or take sides. I will say, communication is healthy.

LLOYD

Healthy? Telling people she dreams of me being castrated Florentined is healthy?

CAROLINE

(knows she's getting him finally)
Lloyd doesn't believe in communicating. "Everything is fine". Everything is pretense. The truth is our sex life is pitiful. No spontaneity.

(Lloyd gives her deadly glare)
The same exact routine every time.

CAROLINE

Couple of kisses. Couple of nipple twists...five minutes later we're watching a "Green Acres" rerun. It's no wonder I had an affair.

LLOYD

(bursting)

How could you tell him that so casually - like, you were asking for a glass of water?!

CAROLINE

May I have a glass of water?

LLOYD

Why don't you have oral sex too. I'll wait in the car.

WONG

Lloyd, how do you feel about Caroline's affair?

CAROLINE

He wants me to wear a red A on my chest and sleep in the basement.

LLOYD

(genuinely)

Is that so unreasonable?

CAROLINE

Everything is black or white with him. He doesn't understand how his distance was responsible...that it didn't mean anything to me. It shouldn't even be counted as an affair.

LLOYD

I think we need a ruling on this.

Lloyd wants to kill her. Wong's hand hovers over the bell.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - EVENING.

Camera pans up from the latex-gloved hands from the earlier scene to their owner, a dark clothed thief, named GUS. He wears a black ski mask that completely covers his face. He stands in the middle of a huge bedroom - studying the gilt framed artwork by the light of the moon through the french windows. His POV pans the room until it lands upon a framed portrait of a man and woman. He has found his mark. He removes the picture

to reveal a WALL SAFE behind it.

But, as he lowers the painting to the floor, he notices TWO NYLON STRINGS attached to the painting, which are attached to a pulley high up on the wall. Gus looks up to see where it ends as he puts the painting to the floor. As soon as the painting sits, a CLICK is heard. Gus looks up and, seconds later, A BUCKET OF STICKY LIQUID POURS ON HIS HEAD,

GUS

Eewwww. Oh no...Son of a bitch!

HE PULLS OFF HIS MASK to wipe himself. He sniffs .

GUS

Maple syrup?

He starts to wipe himself dry with his hat BUT HIS FINGERS AND HANDS KEEP STICKING TO HIS BODY. Frustrated, he puts the mask in his pocket and he looks at the wall safe with a fierceness; He opens a SMALL KIT, revealing a GLEAMING SET OF HIGH TECH TOOLS

CUT TO:

INT. WONG'S OFFICE - EVENING.

WONG

Have you forgiven Caroline for her affair?

LLOYD

Look - It's was a long time ago.
It's over. I'm fine about. I just
don't want to talk about it.

WONG

What do you want from the marriage?

LLOYD

What..what do I want? Nothing.
I have everything I need.

CAROLINE

Pfft! What a liar!

WONG

No namecalling.

CAROLINE

You're so unhappy you can hardly
breath. And I feel it! In every word,
in every gesture, in every silence...
And I'm miserable!

CAROLINE

(breaks down)

How can we both be in the marriage
and I'm miserable and you're content!?

LLOYD

Luck?

WONG

Caroline, what do you want from the
marriage?

LLOYD

Oh this should be good.

CAROLINE

What does that mean?

LLOYD

Because you don't know what you
want and you blame me for it.
She's impossible to satisfy.
You know what she really dreams
about being? Go ahead - tell him!

CAROLINE

A black back up singer.

LLOYD

SEE! She doesn't even fantasize in
her own race. She lives in fantasies.
But what's the truth here - let's
really understand this...

(Caroline is fuming)

She lives in a beautiful home

CAROLINE

Which his mother owns.

LLOYD

She doesn't have to work...
I have a great job....

CAROLINE

Which he hates! We're in servitude
to his mother because we owe
her money from a loan I told him we
never should have taken..

LLOYD

Oh, not this again! First of all
the loan was your idea!

WONG DINGS THE BELL BUT THEY DON'T RESPOND.

CAROLINE

Lie! A business loan from a normal bank - Not from Satan Mom who's been charging us eighteen percent interest since 1987...We personally have nothing! We personally own nothing!

LLOYD

She blames my mother for everything that's gone wrong in our life. She never finishes anything she starts. Scandinavian cooking classes - the photography courses.. Existential philosophy courses...

CAROLINE

At least I go after my dreams!

LLOYD

To be what? - somebody who takes photographs of Lutfish to prove the nothingness of being? No wonder our son's so confused.

CAROLINE

See! He blames me for Jesse?! Is that right?!

WONG

I am not here to take sides or-...

CAROLINE

OH WHAT THE HELL GOOD ARE YOU!

(to Lloyd)

YOU'RE THE ONE who suffocated Jesse with limitations. Our son is a very sensitive and creative...

LLOYD

Juvenile delinquent!

CAROLINE

..BOY! He has the kind of imagination-

LLOYD

- that the Mafia give scholarships for. In ninth grade we told him he could get a part time job. You know what he did - he started running an escort service for the football team. And HE GAVE OUT MY MOTHER'S PHONE NUMBER!

CAROLINE
I STILL SAY, GETTING LAID BY AN EIGHTEEN
YEAR OLD LINEBACKER IS JUST WHAT SHE NEEDS!

DING. WONG HITS THE BELL repeatedly!

WONG
Let's lower our voices.

LLOYD/CAROLINE
FUCK YOU!

Caroline GRABS THE BELL OUT FROM UNDER WONG'S HAND, causing him to HIT THE DESK, causing the SNOW DOME to fall and BREAK it's picture perfect Christmas scene.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - EVENING.

OUR THIEF is emptying out the safe of all it's valuables. One by one, he flips open jewel boxes and dumps the contents into a fanny pack on his waist. The safe is almost empty as he reaches in and is stopped by the PAIN OF A MOUSETRAP, crushing his fingers.

GUS
Ow...ow...ow...ow...ow...
(pulls mousetrap out of bag)
Goddamnmotherfuckingroadrunner bullshit!

Suddenly, he hears a slightly audible WHIRRING SOUND coming from inside the safe. Pulling his hands out of the trap, he looks into the safe...He freezes when he realizes he is looking straight into the LENS of and INFRARED CAMERA, FILMING HIM W/O HIS MASK. Without thinking, he angrily reaches into the safe for the camera. SNAP! Another mousetrap.

GUS
Shit... Shit.. Shit.. Shit.. Shit...

Now the fingers on his other hand are sorely wounded. He rips the trap off and reaches in again. But, - BY PULLING on THE LENS of the camera, HE ACTIVATES A SOUND ALARM that pierces through the night...and SIMULTANEOUSLY OPENS A TRAP DOOR THROUGH WHICH HE PROMPTLY FALLS O.S.

CUT TO;

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT.

A sedan is parked across the street under a willow tree. Gus's

MIDDLE-AGED PARTNER, MURRAY, is covertly drinking booze from a bag when he hears the alarms. He jumps. Murray is a nervous wreck. He doesn't know what to do. He whispers;

MURRAY

Oh-oh! Gussie, where the hell are you?

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION BASEMENT - NIGHT.

Gus falls through a LAUNDRY CHUTE in the ceiling ONTO A POOL TABLE directly below it. He falls flat on his back, knocking the wind out of him. HIS GUN, which has a SILENCER ATTACHED, slides onto the floor. An EVIL GROWLING comes from the darkness. Slowly, FEROCIOUS MASTIFF steps into view with what appears to be a dead raccoon in his jaws. Gus is aghast. He stands, picking up a pool cue for protection. The Mastiff, named CANNIBAL, drops the raccoon and stares at his new prey.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT.

TWO POLICE CARS have now arrived, their policemen exiting. CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE STREET - MURRAY AND THE SEDAN ARE GONE.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION BASEMENT - NIGHT.

Through the basement windows, he can see the police heading toward the house and two more cars arriving to back them up. Gus looks at the dog who is watching his every move and gets an idea.

GUS

Where did you get that raccoon, fella?

He looks at Cannibal's paws, which are covered in dirt. He realizes there must be a way out from under the house the dog has created. He squats down on the pool table and starts collecting balls. The mastiff inches over to make sure he isn't trying to get away. Armed with pool balls, Gus eyes his mark - setting in his mind the place where he is going to run; back the same way the dog first appeared.

GUS

Want to play?...uh..want to play catch?

He throws the pool ball in the opposite direction, but the mastiff just watches the ball sail away then returns his glaring eyes back to Gus...Gus is annoyed. He hurls a ball right at the dog's head. But the mastiff deftly catches it in his mouth and CRUSHES IT WITH HIS TEETH. Terrified;

GUS
AAhhhhh.....Fuck me!

Gus hears the police upstairs. He thinks quickly. He realizes the contents of his fanny pack might help. He pulls out a A SPARKLING DIAMOND BRACELET. Cannibal stares at the object with interest. Gus resents this necessary step; He throws the bracelet far off and the mastiff goes for it. At the same moment, he sprints off the table, GRABS HIS GUN, and heads for the back of the basement - running through old boxes and trunks... until he sees a DIRT HOLE at the base of the far wall... Gus runs for it and starts to burrow into the hole...

Cannibal retrieves a necklace, then stops. He looks toward the back of the basement and sees GUS'S BUTT sticking out of the hole. Like a bull seeing a red cape, Cannibal charges.... Inside the dirt hole, Gus has almost wedged his whole body in far enough to see another hole of light coming from the other end. Suddenly, SNAP!! Cannibal has made contact...

GUS
AAAHHHHHHHOOOWWWWWWWWWWW!!!!

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER.

The two cops head down the stairs and stop when they see: Cannibal with a diamond necklace and blood dripping from his mouth. COP ONE, STEVE, comments with disbelief:

STEVE
My God Phil. I think he ate the sucker.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION - BACK OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT.

Gus crawls painfully out of his hole to the back of the house which faces a dense woods. He holds on to his butt and runs....

CUT TO:

INT. LLOYD AND CAROLINE'S CAR - EVENING.

Caroline and Lloyd drive in silence, until;

LLOYD
What a fraud - what kind of marriage counselor recommends divorce?

CAROLINE

He's right you know. We should get a divorce.

LLOYD

Caroline, please...no more drama today.

Furious, CAROLINE GRABS THE WHEEL AND TURNS...LLOYD SCREAMS for her to let go! They skid onto the shoulder. Lloyd stops the car.

LLOYD

Are you nuts!?

CAROLINE

I want a divorce Lloyd.

LLOYD

Oh please. Just because we fight?
We've always fought.

CAROLINE

But we used to wind up making love after.

LLOYD

When? Where was I?

CAROLINE

Now all we do is fight.
I'm tired of who I am with you.
I'm tired of who we are together.
I want my life back. Can you
honestly say you're happy?

LLOYD

Yes. I'm very happy. I'm
happy I'm not a leper and I can dial
a phone without my fingers breaking off.
Who even asks that kind of question anymore?

CAROLINE

I do! And you used to! When you were
working two jobs so we could live
in one room on the Upper West Side!
When there were things you were
shooting for, working for....

LLOYD

Well they didn't work out Caroline!
SORRY! When can we get on with our lives?!

CAROLINE

(serious, genuine)
What lives? You call this a life?

Beat. They turn away from each other for a moment. In an effort to pretend nothing bad has been said, Lloyd casually turns on the car and the radio, only to a LOCAL NEWS REPORT;

RADIO (V.O.)

....suspect is still at large. The robbery occurred between six and seven o'clock..

They drive off, not paying attention to the report.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS; CHIEF OF POLICE OFFICE - NIGHT.

SUPER; 6:15 PM

CHIEF OF POLICE BEN HUFF, a round, middle aged Vincent Gardenia, sits with his head in his hands behind his desk as OUTRAGED WEALTHY RESIDENTS, led by BOB BURLEY, express their concerns;

BOB

How could this have happened in Old Saybrook!?

ANOTHER RESIDENT

Why weren't there more police on the streets!?

A THIRD RESIDENT

This guy has been terrorizing affluent communities all through Connecticut for over three months - DON'T YOU READ THE PAPERS!?

He throws a newspaper on Huff's desk. Headline reads MASKED BANDIT STILL AT LARGE....A FEMALE RESIDENT in a fur coat remarks snidely;

FEMALE RESIDENT

He's probably gotten out of the habit from living in New York.

Huff looks up, with disdain;

HUFF

Look! I told you people. State police had instructed us to keep our eyes open but they were convinced he was heading west, not south. I put more men on the street but they're not qualified for this kind of thing.

FEMALE RESIDENT

And why not? They're police aren't they?

HUFF

They have no experience.
Nothing ever happens in
this town. The only time we
get calls from you people
is when some kid is playing a
practical joke or your faggot
dogs start humping each other
without permission.

(Residents are appalled)

Any time there's any real problem,
you people call your judge
friends and your state official
friends and your federal bureau
friends. Well why don't you call them
now and get the hell out of my office!

BOB

(smug)

It doesn't necessarily have to be
YOUR office Lt. Huff. I'm calling
an emergency meeting of the Old
Saybrook Emergency Community Committee.
I will be suggesting that our volunteers
patrol the streets since you and
what you laughingly refer to as
a police force are so inept. And,
unless, by some miracle, you actually
accomplish something and apprehend
this criminal, I will suggest at
the next town meeting that you be replaced
as chief of police as quickly as possible.

(Huff is enraged)

Let's face it. You've never been
happy here. It's never been the
right mix...I'm sure after your
exciting war against crime in
New York, coming to our boring
SAFE community was a bit of a let down...

(facetiously)

Especially when one realizes what
a success you must have been in
making the streets of New York so safe.

The other residents snicker. Huff hates these people.

HUFF

Get out.

Bob is obviously the leader. He makes a motion with his head and the rest follow him out.

Alone, Huff rises from his desk. We can see that HUFF HAS A BUM LEG as he limps to the bathroom, rubbing his leg. He takes two aspirins, with some water from the tap. He is in pain. Above his private toilet, is a PAGE CUT OUT FROM A TRAVEL MAGAZINE - depicting a SCENE from some ISLAND PARADISE - a scantily clad couple with great bodies are running into a blue green ocean, looking back over their shoulders at the camera. As Huff gazes at it longingly, we SUPERIMPOSE HIS HEAD onto the young, virile, body in the ad. Frustrated, Huff rips it down.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEVEN ELEVEN STORE - NIGHT.

Lloyd drives into the parking lot and stops.

INT. CAR - NIGHT.

A moment of silence, until;

CAROLINE

You can divorce me - I don't care about alimony. You can say I was unfaithful.

LLOYD

You were.

CAROLINE

That's why I said you can say it!

LLOYD

No, you said it as if it weren't true but I could say it just to get the divorce. Except it is true and we're not getting a divorce.

Caroline gets out as Lloyd raises the volume on the radio;

RADIO (V.O.)

...Old Saybrook Lane...suspect has escaped..Police are now searching for...

CAROLINE

Aren't you coming in with me?

LLOYD

I want to listen to the news. There is a world going on beyond our problems Caroline.

Stepping out, Caroline slams the door, then turns to say;

CAROLINE

Just because you've made your
decree about this divorce,
doesn't mean I'm giving it up.

LLOYD

Caroline, the day you see anything
through to the end, I'll stick
my own dick in my ear!

Angry, Caroline storms off. Lloyd leans his head back into his seat. He is exhausted. Pent up. And maybe even a little frightened Caroline is serious. Behind him, through the back window of the car, we see GUS LIMPING INTO THE PARKING LOT FROM BEHIND SOME TREES and head for the Seven Eleven.

CUT TO:

INT. SEVEN ELEVEN - NIGHT.

The store is decorated for Christmas. Behind the counter, a CASHIER IS DRAPED WITH GARLANDS AND TINSELS hanging from her hat. She looks cold and tired and miserable as she bangs the cash register, trying to get the blood back into her fingers.

DOWN AISLE THREE, Caroline reaches for the last can of egg nog, at the same time a HOUSEWIFE in a mink coat grabs it. Both pull the can off, refusing to let go. Housewife is desperate.

HOUSEWIFE

I need this. I have ten extra people
at my house for cocktails!

CAROLINE

Well my in-laws are coming tonight
and sleeping over.

HOUSEWIFE.

But my guests are here. Who knows?
Your in-laws may not show up - they
could get lost or have a horrible accident.

CAROLINE

(loving the idea)
Don't tease me.

DOWN AISLE FIVE, Gus kneels - stuffing tissues from a box off the shelf into his pants to stop the dog bite from bleeding. Through the store window, he can see a PATROLLING POLICE CAR driving slowly around the neighborhood.. He must find a way out of there.

DOWN AISLE FOUR, Caroline grabs a can of cocktail onions. She leans her head against the shelf. She looks at her wedding ring and begins to cry - the impact of her unhappiness finally breaking through. She can't hold it in anymore.

In AISLE FIVE, Gus hears someone crying. He moves down to the end of his aisle to peer around the corner.

In AISLE FOUR, Caroline sniffs her tears back and searches for a tissue, when A VOICE FROM BEHIND causes her to freeze.

GUS (BEHIND HER)

Don't move. Don't turn. Don't
say a word. This is a gun on your back.

Caroline feels a GUN jabbing her in the ribs. She is petrified.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER.

Lloyd is listening to the radio.

RADIO

"...the ninth robbery in a three month
spree throughout the Connecticut
area for the unidentifiable Masked Bandit..."

Caroline is shoved into the front as Gus hops into the back.

LLOYD

You can't believe what...
(Gus jumps in)
HEY!...What's going on? WHO IS HE?

CAROLINE

He's the world that was beyond
our problems which is now our problem!

LLOYD

My God...Carrie are you all right?

GUS

(POINTS HIS GUN AT LLOYD)
Drive.
(Lloyd hesitates)
DRIVE!

CAROLINE

(scared)
Lloyd?

LLOYD
It's all right...It's all right.

Shakily, Lloyd starts the car and heads out of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLARD MANSION - NIGHT.

A mob scene of police cars and on-lookers. Officer Steve moves through the crowd to Huff.

STEVE
We found this fanny pack of jewels and
this mask with this sticky stuff...

HUFF
(sniffs it)
Maple syrup.

STEVE
Oh, thank God. Phil thought it
might be semen.

HUFF
(concerned)
Phil needs to talk to a therapist.

A SECOND OFFICER appears.

SECOND OFFICER
Lt. Huff? There's this Assistant General
Guy on the horn for you.

Huff walks to his car with the bracelet and the mask, and picks up the car phone.

HUFF
Yeah?

INTERCUT ATTORNEY GENERAL ASSISTANT WARREN speaking from the backseat of a limousine. He is friendly and supercilious.

WARREN
Huff. Will Warren here. I'm an
assistant to the State Attorney General.
I hear we have a chance a nabbing
our local bandit in your little town.

HUFF
(already annoyed)
Yes "WE" do.

WARREN

Well, I want you to know we have everything under control. All train and bus stations are covered. All roads leading out of Old Saybrook are blocked and every car will be stopped and searched by State Police Forces.

HUFF

Well..that's great but..we have things under control here too.. My men are searching the Willard place...

WARREN

NO! Absolutely not! Get them out of there. I personally called Mr. Willard in Bimini. He's a personal friend of the attorney general's and he told me that a very intricate and sophisticated booby trap was constructed, which might gives us a video tape identification of the thief.

HUFF

Where is it?

WARREN

Now we'll take care of that. I don't want your townies messing with that delicate equipment.
(Huff is pissed)
We have a forensics teams from New York on their way at this moment. I'll be meeting them there personally in one hour.

HUFF

Well then what the hell am I supposed to do?

WARREN

Well, you can round up any suspicious characters I suppose - although official identification won't be made til we see that tape...Besides that, enjoy your Christmas.

Huff is fuming. He hangs up and steps out of the car. He motions for Phil and Steve. Huff feels humiliated;

HUFF

Listen...get our men out of there. They..they got professionals coming in.

STEVE/PHIL

Great/ We can go home!

He runs off to the mansion. Huff is left stewing. He begins limping ahead. Gradually, the limping gets faster as HUFF GETS AN IDEA.

HUFF

To hell with this!

Excited, he almost hops towards the front door of the mansion. And as his men retreat, HUFF ENTERS THE MANSION to search for that tape himself!

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT.

Gus leans over the front seat as he listens to the radio...

LOCAL RADIO (V.O.)

...Again, all roads leading out of the Saybrook, Hartford area are blocked. Cars are being detained and searched one at a time. If you have family expecting you, you might...

GUS

Turn it off.

Caroline does. The silence is worse. She tries to act casual;

CAROLINE

I can't believe they go through all this trouble for a jewel thief. I mean, it's not like you killed anyone.

GUS

Isn't it silly? Although it's still early.
(thinks, then;)
Take me to your place.

LLOYD

Now listen, we'll drop you off anywhere you like and we won't say a word. Believe me, we're not heroes.

CAROLINE

Yes...I can vouch for that - Lloyd is no hero..He's really...

GUS

Shut-up !

Silence. He leans into the backseat. They drive in silence for a moment, until Lloyd sort of laughs to himself with apparent irritation. Caroline whispers;

CAROLINE

What?

LLOYD

(curtly)
Nothing.

CAROLINE

No. What? What was that laugh for?

LLOYD

You know perfectly well.

CAROLINE

No I don't.

LLOYD

Oh yeah right. "Lloyd is no hero,
I can vouch for that"

CAROLINE

Oh please! I was just trying to-...

LLOYD

Go to hell.

Gus can't believe what he's witnessing. Caroline retorts;

CAROLINE

We never would have been in this
situation if you had come into
the store with me...

LLOYD

That's ridiculous - you make no sense.

CAROLINE

He never would have taken a couple
as hostage.

GUS

(sing song)
Shut-uUUUup!

LLOYD
He's taking a couple now!

GUS
(Suddenly sees)
STOP SIGN!

Lloyd is so caught up with the recent argument, he runs it. A Mercedes crosses the intersection just as Lloyd runs the sign. The Mercedes stops short and honks. Lloyd continues on;

LLOYD
Morons.

CAROLINE
You ran the stop sign.

LLOYD
I did not. There was no stop sign.

CAROLINE
Yes there was and yes you did.

LLOYD
You didn't even see it!

CAROLINE
He saw it! He said STOP SIGN.
I heard him very clearly.

Gus stares at them, beginning to doubt this was a good idea. He murmurs to himself;

GUS
I don't believe this. I hijacked
my parents.

Caroline suddenly realizes;

CAROLINE
Oh God Lloyd - We're supposed to
pick Jesse up at the train station at eight.

Lloyd drops his own anger and looks genuinely concerned.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILITARY ACADEMY - SAME TIME.

SOUNDTRACK; "I SAW MOMMY KISSING SANTA CLAUS"...

C.U. SIGN ; WILLIAMS MILITARY ACADEMY.

SUPER ; 6:45 PM

Establishing shot of the austere, gated academy campus.

CUT TO:

INT. JESSE'S DARK ROOM - NIGHT

C.U. on a PHOTO being developed in a tray of chemicals. The image grows clear as TWO HANDS pick up the photo and hang it on a line of string to dry;

THE PHOTO - is of a big, burly MAN with his pants down around his ankles being PADDLE SPANKED by a TOPLESS WOMAN in wearing LEATHER "FLYING NUN'S" HABIT.

JESSE CHASSEUR leans in to inspect his work. He is a wiry, bespectacled, teenager; an adolescent intellectual bordering on genius or psychosis. Sort of like a short, teenage Tony Perkins. A BELL RINGS. Jesse is alerted.

INT. JESSE DORM ROOM -

Jesse exits his dark room, which is really his closet, crossing to his door. THE DOOR OPENS TO REVEAL;

THE BIG BURLY MAN is the same MAN FROM THE PHOTO. He speaks with forced authority, although it is clear he is uncomfortable. He is making a show for anyone who might be in ear shot.

SISKEL

Chasser.

JESSE

Colonel Siskel..Hi.

SISKEL

I'm glad I caught you before you left for the holidays. May I come in?

JESSE

(loving that he is uncomfortable)
No.

Squirming, Siskel whispers anxiously;

SISKEL

I can't give it to you out in the hall.

JESSE

(sticks his head out)
Why? Most everybody's gone.

SISKEL
(revealing his real disgust)
Why aren't you gone? Although I
don't suppose Christmas
means anything to the AntiChrist.

JESSE
I've just developed some new pictures.
Stunning. I may put a book together.
Something like Mapplethorpe only
more personal.

SISKEL
Demon seed.

He reaches in his coat as he pretends to COUGH, and quickly
passes Jesse AN ENVELOPE OF MONEY.

JESSE
My best to the wife and kids.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHASSEUR HOME - NIGHT.

A beautiful picture book Colonial classic. Lloyd's car pulls up.

SUPER ; 7:00 PM

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR HOUSE - NIGHT.

The front door opens. Caroline steps in gingerly and flicks on
the lights. She is quickly followed in by Lloyd and Gus, who
shuts the door behind him. He is clearly in pain - his leg
from the fall and his butt from the dog. He looks around
the house as he leans against the door - his gun extended;
A beautifully decorated antique filled upper middle class home.

GUS
Nice...You rich?

CAROLINE/LLOYD
No...We're not..Not really..No.

GUS
Antiques like that ain't cheap.

LLOYD
Oh that - I run an antique shop
in town. These...these are all from -

CAROLINE
It's his mothers store.

LLOYD
SO?

CAROLINE
Well, you made it sound like it
was yours.."I run an antique store"...

LLOYD
I did not..

CAROLINE
Oh come on Lloyd - you think he
cares if you work for your mother?

LLOYD
I did not say it was my
store...

GUS
HE DID NOT AND DO I GIVE A SHIT
ABOUT THIS?.....(THEY STOP)....
You got any rope?

LLOYD
For what?

GUS
What is this, an interview? - I'M
GONNA TIE YOU UP, ALL RIGHT?

LLOYD
Well we don't have any rope!

CAROLINE
We have bungy cords - they might work.

Lloyd gives her a dirty look.

GUS
Where are they?

CAROLINE
Right this way...In the kitchen.

Gus points his gun and Caroline and Lloyd lead him to the kitchen through the dining room. Gus notices the DINING ROOM is FULLY DECORATED with the DINING TABLE ALREADY SET FOR DINNER. There is a Scandinavian feel to the decorations;

GUS
You expecting company?

CAROLINE

Well it is Christmas Eve.
Lloyd's mother and his brother's family
are coming for dinner.

GUS

What time?

LLOYD

They should be here by nine.

CUT TO:

INT. HOWARD JOHNSON'S - NIGHT.

SUPER; 7:05 PM

Camera angles on a table full of plates full of food. Hands criss crossing over each other to grab bread, bacon, butter, milk. There are three pairs of adult hands, two pairs of kids. Camera angles on GARY (Lloyd's brother), CONNIE, their children JOHN, ten, and MARY, thirteen, and ROSE, Lloyd's mother. Both Connie and Rose are you typical nouveau riche royalty - fur coats in sequined jogging outfits with Chanel handbags.

MARY

But I'm not hungry now. I thought
we were eating at Uncle Lloyd's?

CONNIE

God knows what disaster your Aunt
Caroline is making - this may
be our last chance for normal food.

ROSE

She does it to irritate me. I'm
the one she's after.

MARY

But I'm not hungry.

CONNIE

EAT! Don't annoy me! It's Christmas!

Connie is a strident woman, reminiscent of Sister Woman in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof". Gary is a nice guy who does what he's told.

GARY

I'm sure she's going to alot of trouble though.

CONNIE

Gary, the last time you ate her cooking

CONNIE

(she whispers)
you had diarrhea for a week.

JOHN

(loudly)
YOU HAD DIARRHEA FOR A WEEK DAD!?

The table next to them, pauses in their meal.
Connie's hand comes sweeping from O.S., clobbering John.

CONNIE

Shut-up! Don't drive me nuts today!
It's Christmas!

MARY

If we hate Aunt Caroline's cooking,
why do we go there every year for Christmas?

ROSE

Because my poor Lloyd needs his family.
Otherwise, he'd be all alone with
that adulteress and her delinquent.

JOHN

I hope they get into a fight like they
always do - Their fights are bitchin.

Connie's hand comes sweeping in from O.S., but John deftly ducks
and she only hits Gary instead.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLARD MANSION - NIGHT.

Alone, Huff makes his way around the scene of the crime; He
kneels down to the trap door, seeing through to the basement,
He notices the maple syrup all over the floor. He moves around
the trap door to the opened wall safe behind the picture. He
smooths his fingers along the edge for any additional booby
trap devices. He looks up at the dangling bucket which poured
the maple syrup over Gus's head. He mimes the syrup whooshing
down on him, then mimes taking off a mask and figures the
video camera might be somewhere in this area. He takes out a
penlight and shines it into the safe. Seeing the lens of the
camera, he smiles. He looks around for where the tape could
be, but sees only the lens; the rest of the camera is built
into the wall. He checks his watch to see how much time he has
before Warren and the professionals show up. It is 7:15 PM

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

This is a well kept, well used kitchen. Shelves of cookbooks line one wall, professional cookware hangs from the ceiling. Lloyd and Caroline are bound to the kitchen chairs with BUNGY CORDS. Gus is looking through a phone book when he asks;

GUS

What's the worst dive bar near here?

CAROLINE

The Mackerel Lounge
How do you know?

LLOYD

The Seventeenth Hole
How do you know?

CAROLINE

I passed by once on the access road -
it's a pit.

LLOYD

Well have you ever "passed by"-
-the Seventeenth Hole? It like
a urinal with windows..

As THEY CONTINUE ARGUING O.S., Gus looks up the number for one of them and dials...

GUS

Hello, is this the Mackerel Lounge?
Is this the bartender? Listen, I'm...

Distracted by the CHASSUERS ARGUING, Gus pauses;

GUS (ON THE PHONE)

Could you hold for just a second?

Holding the phone in his shoulder, GUS LEANS ACROSS TO THE SINK, TURNS ON THE WATER FULL BLAST, PULLS OUT THE SINK HOSE AND JET STREAMS WATER INTO CAROLINE AND LLOYD'S FACES; Choking, they stop arguing. Gus returns to the phone;

GUS (ON THE PHONE)

Hi, thanks...Listen, I'm looking
for a friend of mine...He's kind of
short, real mangy looking....

CUT TO:

INT. MACKEREL LOUNGE - NIGHT.

A dockside bar, full of dockside characters. A weary and shaky Murray sits at the bar for a quick shot. A row of sleaze balls all look to the T.V. above the bar. Murray downs his drink. THE BARTENDER on the phone with Gus explains;

BARTENDER
You just described everyone here.
...(Listens) Huh-huh...
(then ANNOUNCES TO BAR)
IS THERE A MURRAY HERE!?

Murray hears his name and is worried - he doesn't answer.
The Bartender listens to Gus for new instructions then ANNOUNCES;

BARTENDER
Is there a fucking waste-of-life
named Murray here?

Relieved, MURRAY SMILES and whispers to himself;

MURRAY
Gus...

Murray approaches the Bartender and takes the phone..Moving
away from the bar, he whispers;

MURRAY
Gus?

INTERCUT GUS talking in the KITCHEN, veiling his rage;

GUS
Hello Murray - how are you sweetheart?

MURRAY
(more worried)
Fine. You?

GUS
Oh fabulous - of course I'm a little
tired from running for FUCKING TEN
HUNDRED MILES BECAUSE THERE WAS NO CAR
WAITING FOR ME!

Caroline and Lloyd get nervous when Gus gets angry.

GUS
I told you if anything went wrong
just act like a drunken vagrant
moron - is that too much of a stretch?

MURRAY
But the cops are crawling all over
kid. I got nervous...

Gus peeks outside the breakfast nook window to see;

A PATROL CAR drives slowly up the block.....

MURRAY

They set up road blocks kid.
And as of midnight, there's
a curfew - nobody but cops and some
neighborhood patrol group allowed
outside. I just heard it at the bar.

GUS

SHIT! GODDAMN SHIT...!

Furious, Gus explodes and KNOCKS THE HANGING POTS above him
with his gun. Unfortunately, the POTS COME CRASHING DOWN ON TOP
OF HIM. Lloyd asks in a most understanding voice;

LLOYD

Is there anything we can do?

GUS

Shut-up Lloyd! Stop being so fucking calm!
(Caroline likes that!)
You want to do something for me!
Don't move. Don't talk. Don't breath,
don't do anything unless I tell ya!

His leg twinges in pain. Lloyd notices.

LLOYD

Is your leg hurting?

GUS

Did I tell you to care!?

MURRAY

Kid, where the hell are you?

GUS

In the neighborhood. Some colonial
suburban death camp with a circular drive.

MURRAY

I'm scared. I...I..can't handle this.

GUS

Yes you can, now just calm down.
You haven't been drinking have you?

MURRAY

(lying - trying to be sober)
No, no...what are ya nuts?
(changes subject)

MURRAY

Listen...why don't we just walk out of town - ya know, mingle with the crowds find some back roads and keep moving til we're across state lines. They still don't know what you look like.

Gus doesn't want to let it be known he may have been videoed.

GUS

Yeah but uh...I..I don't think I can walk very well...My leg's...
(glares at Lloyd)
my leg's a little stiff from when I fell through the trap door.

MURRAY

You fell through a trap door?

LLOYD

Didn't you case the set-up before?

GUS

(miming Lloyd's voice)
"Didn't you case the set-up before"?
Who the fuck are you, Willie Sutton?

CAROLINE

Lloyd, stop being such a know-it-.....

GUS

Caroline shut-up!

Caroline does. Lloyd likes that and remarks;

LLOYD

Gee, he's better than the bell.

Gus looks up to see A PLASTIC MAP OF OLD SAYBROOK pinned to the phone message board covered with little notes. he pushes the notes away and gets an overview of the town...HE SPOTS A PLACE CALLED WINSLOW HARBORS...

GUS

THE DOCKS!...The water. We're near the water!...It's Christmas Eve for Christs sakes. Cops want to get home like everybody
(his mind is racing, rationalizing)
else. They'll get lazy. They'll be distracted. We'll find us a boat. Meet me at Winslow Harbor at 8:00 -

GUS

Look, if for some reason, something goes wrong - take down the number here... 247-3537. And do not screw up old man or I'm gonna pull the hair out of your ears one by one, ya hear me?

IN THE BAR;

Murray hangs up the phone and briskly walks to the door then, seeing the neighborhood groups in the streets, turns around for one more drink....He sits at the bar beside a DRUNKEN WOMAN in her forties. She sees Murray is shaking with fear...She puts her hand on his back;

DRUNKEN WOMAN

Don't worry honey - It's just Christmas.

Murray looks to her with grateful eyes.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CHASSEUR KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Gus is talking to himself, trying to calm down and think. Caroline and Lloyd watch him apprehensively.

GUS

(talking to himself)
O.K...O.K...just have to get to the docks and I'll be out of here!
...shouldn't be too hard.
Can't walk...O.K...O.K...
There's an idea here...There IS....
(suddenly yells at invisible self)
NO! NO! I won't! I won't do it O.K.?

CAROLINE

(nervous)
Won't do what? Lloyd?

GUS

I want a cigarette. I haven't smoked for three years. Prison shrink told me I should talk myself out of my urges....(suddenly)
I SAID NO! WHAT ARE YOU DEAF!

CAROLINE

You've seen a therapist? And it helps you not to smoke?

GUS

No, it makes me want to shoot people.
Do you have any?

LLOYD

Well I don't smoke and Caroline just quit
so maybe that's a sign you shouldn't.

GUS

Or maybe it's a sign I should kill
you both and go buy cigarettes!

CAROLINE

There are some in the drawer there.

LLOYD

(surprised)

Caroline? You told me you quit.

Gus opens the drawer and finds the cigarettes.

CAROLINE

I told you I wouldn't smoke in
the house, I never said I quit.

LLOYD

You said you quit! That you hadn't
had a cigarette in three months.

Gus takes one and lights it on the stove, watching them argue;

CAROLINE

I hadn't finished a cigarette
in three months - I take a few
tokes. I don't inhale.

LLOYD

YOU ARE SUCH A LIAR!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

CAROLINE

Oh please! Will you stop!
I AM NOT A LIAR! YOU'RE THE...

Gus calmly steps beside them and simultaneously, TIPS BOTH THEIR
CHAIRS BACK SO EACH FALL BACKWARDS, BOUND TO THEIR CHAIR.

CAROLINE/LLOYD

Ow!

Gus steps over Caroline and points the gun in her face, speaking
like friendly smiling teacher reprimanding a ten year old;

GUS

Did you say you quit, Caroline?
(softly, smiling)

GUS
Did ya? Come on - Tell me?
(CAROLINE NODS)
Then you're a LIAR! End of story.

LLOYD
Thank you!

Gus steps over Lloyd, pointing the gun in his face;

GUS
You saw the stop sign didn't you Lloyd?
(Lloyd doesn't answer)
Yes you did... Come on - tell me....
(LLOYD NODS)
Then you're a LIAR! So shut
the fuck up.
(Caroline feels vindicated, partially)
I'm really hating you both so much.
I can't think! All I
keep hearing is "You're such a
child Lloyd! Go to hell Caroline!"
Over and over and over in my
head. It doesn't stop!
Gags...I need gags...

LLOYD
Look, if you're smoking,
could you open a window?

Without missing a beat, GUS SHOOTS A HOLE THROUGH THE WINDOW.

GUS
That better?

Caroline notices BLOOD ON HER KITCHEN STOOL and Gus's backside.

CAROLINE
Eeww...

GUS
What? Oh yeah - Do you have any band-aids?

LLOYD
Were you shot?

GUS
No..Damn dog bit me.

CAROLINE
(amazed he survived)
Cannibal bit you!?

GUS
(really pissed)
His name is Cannibal?

CAROLINE
The...the band aids are in the
bathroom through the master bedroom
to your left...Use the ouchless,
they're in the green container.

GUS
Remember kids - if you start yelling,
I can get back here faster than anybody else!

Gus exits, after disconnecting the phone receiver from the
phone and taking it with him. Caroline and Lloyd remains on the
floor staring up at the ceiling;

LLOYD
I don't believe it. You want to
have sex with him!

CAROLINE
What?!

LLOYD
"Use the ouchless", "OH the bungy
cords might work"...

CAROLINE
I'm frightened! Humans get frightened
because they have feelings - didn't
your alien leaders teach you that
BEFORE THEY SENT YOU HERE?!

LLOYD
I suppose you'll use this
kidnaping as a reason to have
another affair - I feel sorry for the
next delivery man that comes to this house.

CUT TO:

INT. WILLARD MANSION - NIGHT.

Huff has broken the plaster around the safe with a fire iron
from the fireplace. He has exposed the rest of the video machine.
It is so sleek and hi tech that HE CAN'T FIND ANY SWITCH OR
OPENING WHICH MIGHT RELEASE A TAPE. Frustrated and covered in
plaster dust he tosses the fire iron onto the floor in anger.
He checks his watch - time is running out. He crosses to a bar
and helps himself to a shot of whiskey. He tries to collect his

thoughts as he FIDDLES UNCONSCIOUSLY WITH A HI-TECH REMOTE CONTROL. He pushes ON and the lights in the bar go on. He pushes another button and MUSIC starts playing. He shuts them both off. He starts to exit. He stops and faces the wall safe, on the other side of the trap door. He looks down at the remote and sees EJECT. He figures "It's can't be that simple". But then he shrugs and figures what the hell. He aims the remote at the wall safe in one last futile effort and presses a button called EJECT.

WIDE ANGLE AS;

To Huff's surprise, the TAPE FLIES OUT OF THE WALL SAFE AND FALLS RIGHT DOWN INTO THE OPEN TRAP DOOR.

Huff looks down the trap door into the basement, at the tape lying on the pool table. He smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHASSUER HOUSE - NIGHT.

SUPER ; 7:45 PM

As another PATROL CAR just passes by the garage opens and the Chasseur jeep backs out....

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT.

Caroline is behind the wheel. Gus is beside her, wrapped up to his neck in Lloyd's overcoat, with Lloyd's scarf wrapped around his face and a hat covering his head. All that's visible are his eyes. His gun is pointed to Caroline's waist, hidden by the coat. SUDDENLY; A FLASH of BRIGHT LIGHTS ILLUMINATES THE CAR. Caroline stops. She is startled.

NEIGHBOR

Caroline!

A NEIGHBOR, GEORGE, runs across his lawn to the car; GEORGE is a large fellow - HE IS DRESSED AS SANTA CLAUS..

Caroline looks to the house which is TASTELESSLY DECORATED WITH LIGHTS, INCLUDING A GIANT, BLINKING NATIVITY SCENE and A BABY JESUS THAT CRIES EVERYTIME THE LIGHTS BLINK.

CAROLINE

Hi George...

GEORGE

How do like my decorations. Isn't Jesus lifelike? Hey Lloyd!

Gus grumbles from behind his scarf;

CAROLINE

Yes..he's sick. He's got laryngitis...

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Lloyd is GAGGED and bungy corded head to foot on the bed.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT.

CAROLINE

We're just going to get some lozenges.

GEORGE

Well, Merry Christmas..
I have a lot of children to get
to before that curfew. Can
you believe the exciting drama
that's unfolding in our little town?
I never thought anything like this
would happen here.

CAROLINE

Me neither.

She drives into the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE STREET OPPOSITE THE DOCKS - NIGHT.

MURRAY sits in his car on an empty street - a bottle at his side.
He checks his watch - 7:50. He sees, and hears, through the
windshield - A GROUP OF CHRISTMAS CAROLERS moving down the
block, SINGING:

CHOIR

"GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN..."

He looks around at the docks, searching for a sign of Gus - but
no one is around. Suddenly, Murray realizes that the
CAROLERS are really loud - He looks around him to see;
THE ENTIRE CHRISTMAS CHOIR HAS GATHERED AROUND THE CAR;

CHOIR

REMEMBER CHRIST OUR SAVIOR
WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY...

Murray is unnerved - these Carolers take on a sinister quality; like Zombies with a hungry look. Murray gets really uncomfortable and tries to start the car, but the Carolers block the front. as they continue singing;

CHOIR
TO SAVE US ALL FROM SATAN'S POWERS
WHEN WE HAVE GONE ASTRAY...

He exits the car and tries to flee, but THE CHOIR STEPS IN FRONT OF HIM, blocking his way;

CHOIR
OH OH TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY
COMFORT AND JOY...OH OH TIDINGS....

Murray panics, but THE CHOIR ENCIRCLE HIM. The "CHOIR LEADER", BOB BURLEY steps forward;

BOB
O.K. people! Thank you. Very good.
Very professional.

They stop singing. Bob turns to Murray.

BOB
Bob Burley. (shakes hands)
We are with the Old Saybrook
Volunteer Community Security Force.
May I see your identification sir?

Murray is terrified. He cannot answer. Bob smiles smugly. He turns away from Murray and WHISTLES.

A VAN comes barreling around the corner and stops before them.

BOB
Put him with the others.

The van door slides open and TWO OTHER SUSPECTS are revealed; a confused Salvation Army Man and Another Drunk. Murray gets in.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD SAYBROOK MAIN STREET - NIGHT.

SOUNDTRACK; "SILENT NIGHT" PLAYS FROM THE TOWN SQUARE;

Caroline and Gus are stuck in traffic around the town square - due in part to the townspeople rushing to get their last minute shopping done before the curfew. Gus watches the happy townsfolk stopping to say hello to other friendly townsfolk - helping each

other with packages, laughing like children. He talks from behind his scarf;

GUS

Look all these "happy townsfolk".
Fucking burns my ass.

CAROLINE

(nervous)

What?

GUS

Christmas Spirit my ass! "Let's spend money we don't have on things we don't need and give them to people we don't like"...Fucking hypocrites... For 363 days they lie and cheat and screw each other blind and on December 25th they all act like Jimmy fucking Stewart. They all think they're gettin into heaven. You know what Jesus is gonna say - "No refunds, No returns - get the hell outta here!"

CAROLINE

You...you believe in heaven?

GUS

Of course I do. If I didn't believe in heaven I'd fucking eat a bullet.

CAROLINE

Then how can you be a thief?

GUS

Oh I got that all figured out. See, I'm the thief on the left...Ya know, to the left of Jesus on the cross. The one who tells his partner to shut up to and stop ragging Jesus cause he doesn't belong there and they do, and Jesus says, "Pal you're in Paradise as soon as I check in!"...See, he got to be a crook all his life and still got into heaven cause he knew he was a scumbag and he knew Jesus was O.K. He wasn't a phony. And he didn't lie to himself. I know what I do is wrong. But I can't help it. I'm weak. But I'm planning to be real sorry about it at the right time.

CAROLINE

What made you become a thief, do you think?

GUS

Advertising.

CAROLINE

YOU were in advertising?

GUS

No, I WATCH advertising! After a while you get sick of looking at things you can't have - sick of people who have so much, they don't know what to do with it - never appreciating what they've got - creating these ridiculous problems - Ever watch these talk shows? (upper crust voice)

"Oh I'm so famous and wealthy. I'm too unhappy. I think I'll eat and vomit all day"...."Oh, I'm too rich - and unhappy, I think I'll take some insulin and have a coma in my bathroom". That Von Bulow broad better stay in that coma - cause if she ever wakes up, there's gonna be some nurse who's been working a double shift to support two kids waiting to to smack the shit outta her. Self indulgent bastards..

This makes Caroline think about her own life...

GUS

Let them try growing up in an orphanage....

CAROLINE

You were an orphan?

GUS

No, I wanted to be...
My parents used to argue - all the time.
(this is close to home for Caroline)
I don't mean a lot - I mean, ALL-THE-TIME. She'd say Good morning - he'd say fuck you. He'd say pass the butter, she'd say fuck you.
So, I'd go to school and

GUS
when my teacher would say Good
Morning class - Guess what I'd say!?

CAROLINE
That's so sad.

GUS
Hey lady - I'm just making conversation.
I'm not bonding so you can keep
your fucking empathy. You're no
different from all of them. Rich,
ungrateful..never worked a day in
your life for anything.

CAROLINE
That's not true.

Caroline indicates THE EXTERIOR OF A BAKE SHOP. She smiles;

CAROLINE
See that bake shop? We used to have
a restaurant there. Me and Lloyd.
We called it La Bella Notte - ya know,
the song from "Lady and the Tramp"
It was the first movie Lloyd and I
ever had sex watching. It was wonderful -
It was a dream of his for a long time.
He ran the whole place - I designed
the interior, helped create the menu.
(sadly)
But after three months and our first
bad review, Lloyd gave up. He said
it was too much for him. He said it
was a mistake and that was that.

Gus looks up ahead in the street and sees BOB BURLEY'S VAN
pulls up to the police station. Bob hops out and slides open
the van door...Out pops The Salvation Army Guy, The Drunk...
and MURRAY! On the TOWNSQUARE LOUDSPEAKER we can hear "SILENT
NIGHT.....HOLY NIGHT..Gus overlaps;

GUS
Holy shit.

CAROLINE
What?

GUS
Who's that guy?

He indicates Bob. Caroline winces.

CAROLINE
Oh, Bob Burley - He's the community
volunteer leader. He's sort of
a cross between Andy Griffith and
Rudolph Hess. Why?

GUS
He's got my partner!

They watch as an anxious Murray is lead into the police station.

GUS
Does he have any authority?

CAROLINE
Well...he picked up Jesse once for
selling copies of Last Tango in
Paris to freshmen...But as long as
your friend gives them our number and
they call and we verify who he is
- they'll let him go.

GUS
Yeah? And who's going to answer the phone?
(Caroline realizes he's right)
Turn around. We have to go back!

CAROLINE
But...but you said I'd drop
you off and then pick up my son?

GUS
(jabs gun into her)
MOVE!

Jostled, Caroline makes a U-Turn.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROUTE NINE - NIGHT.

Huff is driving back from the Willard mansion, happy as a clam,
when he spots;

A FIGURE HITCHHIKING BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. There are no other
cars or people in sight. He pulls over to investigate.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT.

Jesse is the person hitchhiking. Huff speaks to him through the
window;

HUFF

Chasser! What you doing out here?

JESSE

It's "Chasseur" Lt. Huff...Eighteenth century French Huguenot.

HUFF

Excuse me...Don't you Huguenots know that hitchhiking is illegal?

JESSE

So's endangering the welfare of a minor, which is what you'll be doing if you leave me here to be abducted by some truck driving pederast.

Huff doesn't like this smartass.

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S CAR - MINUTES LATER.

JESSE

My mother was supposed to come get me.
I don't know what happened?
(annoyingly familiar)
So, how's business?

HUFF

Pretty dull since you went away.

JESSE

Miss me?

HUFF

No.

JESSE

Hey remember the time I called everybody in town and told them their houses had high levels of radon leakage? Ha. I really miss being a kid.

HUFF

So, how is juvenile prison?

JESSE

(defensive)
It's a military academy. My father went there.

HUFF

Oh yeah...some war hero. Ha...

Jesse is hurt and angered by this remark but hides it. He grabs the VIDEO TAPE on the seat.

JESSE

What's this - Yuletide porn?

HUFF

Gimme that!

(grabs it back)

It's important evidence. I'm going to identify that Masked sonofabitch thief.

JESSE

Oh yeah. Well that would be amazing. Especially since you couldn't identify your ass if you were bent over in front of a mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD SAYBROOK HOME - NIGHT.

GEORGE (a.k.a. SANTA) is handing out stocking stuffers to the children of a neighbor. The children squeal with delight.

SANTA

Ho-ho-ho....

The parents and relatives watch with warm expressions.

MOTHER

It's cold out there tonight,
you think Santa would like
something to eat?

The children cheer and pull Santa with them. George eyes an incredible BUFFET OF GLORIOUS FOOD.

SANTA

HO-HO-...

Except the children pull him to a SNACK TABLE WITH OREO COOKIES AND A GLASS OF MILK. One of the cookies has a bite in it. Santa is disappointed.

SANTA

Ho...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Caroline and Lloyd are GAGGED and "bungy-corded" face to face, shoulders to ankles, lying on their sides on the one of the twin beds. Gus is pacing and smoking, STARING AT THE PHONE.

GUS

So why doesn't he call!
I'm gonna kill him.

Caroline and Lloyd ARE LOUDLY TALKING FROM BENEATH THEIR GAGS. It is so distracting, Gus finally UN-GAGS THEM;

GUS

WHAT!?

CAROLINE

What about our son! He's
probably on his way...

LLOYD

Our son has probably taken
a cab and is on his way....

GUS

Well, it'll be a real Chasser
family picnic.

LLOYD

That's Chasseur, not Chasser - it's
Eighteenth Century French Huguenot.

GUS

You're gonna be twentieth century
maggot snot, if you say one more word!
I'm gonna need more cords for your
son - where do I get them?

CAROLINE

Uh....Go through the kitchen, into
the laundry room - there might be
some old clothes lines...But please!

Gus is on his way out. Caroline looks to Lloyd, fearful for Jesse and whispers pleadingly for Lloyd to do something;

CAROLINE

Lloyd!

Before Gus exits, Lloyd tries the first thing he can think of.

LLOYD

Why don't you just give yourself up!?

Caroline is worried about Gus' reaction, but impressed by Lloyd's effort. Gus stops at the door. Lloyd continues calmly;

LLOYD

You're not going to kill an entire family. It's over.

Gus has stopped and turns around to slowly approach Lloyd;

GUS

How do you know what I'll do?

LLOYD

(thinks fast)

Well, because you're not the type.
You're a thief, you're not a killer.

GUS

I hate guys like you. Smug. Superior.
Think they know everything about everything.

LLOYD

(peaceful voice)

I'm only trying to understand what you expect to gain from...

GUS

Understand this Lloyd! I've been dropped through a trap door, bit in the ass my a fucking pool ball crunching dog and I've got an entire state after me... I'm having a really bad day! And for what - for taking from people who have so much, they wouldn't know what they were missing.

LLOYD

Well you're not exactly Robin Hood.
I mean, you ARE a criminal.

GUS

Criminal? You might as well say American! This country was built by thieves and murderers, buddy! I got news for you! Arbitrages are NOT the indigenous tribe of Connecticut! Not all of us have mummies and daddies with antique stores that we can live off of or open restaurants when we feel like it.

LLOYD
(surprised, to Caroline)
You told HIM about the restaurant?

GUS
Yeah I heard you couldn't cut it working
for a living!

Gus continues but camera remains on Lloyd as his growing sense of betrayal turns to anger. Caroline waits for a reaction.

GUS (O.S.)
So don't try to "understand" me
Lloyd - there's no way Mr. Country
Club Connecticut can understand
a runaway who had to live off
the streets, running with thieves and...

Lloyd's anger peeks;

LLOYD
Oh shut-up!

Caroline and Gus are shocked.

LLOYD
I'm supposed to feel sorry for you?
Well I'm sorry! I didn't grow up
in a Dickens novel! O.K?
(stirred)
You know you and my wife have
a lot in common - you both think
you have some kind of right to life
working out just the way you want it,
and if it doesn't, you get to act
anyway you want!

Gus and Caroline are both startled by Lloyd sudden assertiveness;

LLOYD
The two of you live in your own
little worlds while people like me have
to keep everything on track...

Caroline has never heard this kind of talk from Lloyd.

LLOYD
I'd love to run around, taking
classes and playing with my Inner Selfness.
I'd love the freedom to be pissed
off and be a criminal, without
respect for anyone...without

LLOYD
any responsibility, except I DON'T HAVE
THE TIME! But you don't see me with a
gun! You don't see me sleeping with
somebody else! You think my life turned
out the way I wanted? YOU THINK WHEN
I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, I SHOUT "GEE I'M
GLAD I'M ME AND NOT SOME NINETEEN YEAR
OLD BILLIONAIRE ROCK STAR WITH THE
BODY OF ATHLETE AND A TWENTY FOUR
HOUR ERECTION! WELL JUST EXCUSE THE
SHIT OUT OF ME!

Both Caroline and Gus are impressed with this outburst of
communication. Suddenly, THEY HEAR JESSE ENTERING THE HOUSE;

CAROLINE
Oh God...Please don't hurt him...

GUS GAGS CAROLINE as LLOYD tries to WARN HIM;

LLOYD
JESSE...JE-

GUS GAGS LLOYD at the same time, kneeling over the two of them.

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT.

Jesse closes the door and looks around. The lights are out. He
senses no one is downstairs so he starts up the staircase to the
second floor, carrying HIS SUITCASE.

He passes his parents bedroom. He sees the light on underneath
the door. He pauses - should he go in and say hi, or not? He
decides not, and continues on to his room.

INT. CAROLINE AND LLOYD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Gus is listening to Jesse through the wall - HE HEARS A SUITCASE
OPENING AND A FLOORBOARD BEING REMOVED. Gus's wonders what he's
doing in there.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT.

Jesse kneels over a opened floorboard. Beside him is his OPENED
SUITCASE, WHICH IS FULL OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS. He stuffing
the cash into the floor.

INT. CAROLINE AND LLOYD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Gus follows the sound of Jesse walking down the hall to the bedroom. He jumps up and flies across the room to hide behind the door. The door bursts open and Jesse enters angrily;

JESSE

You know, it would have been nice
if somebody was at the station to pick...!

He sees his parents tied up on the bed. His first reaction is embarrassment;

JESSE

Oh Jeez...I'm sorry...I...I should've knocked.

He turns to leave and finds Gus blocking the door, pointing his gun. Jesse freezes. Gus slams the door behind him and locks it. Jesse takes a step back...Realizing Gus is the "criminal at large" he says coolly;

JESSE

Gee...I didn't know Santa carried
a piece.

GUS

Go sit near your parents.

JESSE

You're the thief guy everybody's
looking for, right?! Woah.

GUS

Sit on the bed!

Jesse backs up to the bed as he continues;

JESSE

My mother has shitty jewelry
but my grandmother has great stuff.

GUS

Shut-up and move !

JESSE

...She'll be here soon. I'll help
you tie her down, if you let me. We
can torture her into telling us where
they are. I know how - she hates having
her hair touched..

GUS

SHUT-UP! WHAT IS IT WITH YOU PEOPLE?
I have a gun! Pointing at you!

GUS

I said shut-up and I have a gun!
But no...you just talk and talk
and talk and talk! What is this,
some strain of suburban Turret's
syndrome?! Now the rule is if I
say stop talking- you stop or I shoot
you! It's ever so simple!

Jesse sits near his parents as Gus starts TEARING UP SHEETS to
bind him with. Jesse whispers to his parents.

JESSE

You guys all right?

Caroline and Lloyd murmur under their gags...

JESSE

Wow...how many children dream of
this moment.

GUS

All right kid, get on the floor.

JESSE

Wait a minute - let my parents go.

Caroline and Lloyd yell from beneath their gags.
Jesse acts cool and negotiable

JESSE

Listen - we got family coming
here any minute. You can't stay
here and you can't let
us go after seeing you right? You
need a hostage. Take me and let them go.

Caroline and Lloyd up their volume. Gus respects this kid.

GUS

We'll just have to cancel dinner.

JESSE

We can't. They're on the road.
They drive down from Boston.

GUS

Shit. I can't move until my partner calls.
He's got three months of work stashed
in his car and I'm not leaving without it.

He checks his watch ; 9:13 - Rubs his head, says to himself;

GUS
Got to think.

JESSE
Can I take off their gags?

GUS
(Panicked)
NO!

But Caroline and Lloyd continue their gagged pleas.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADBLOCK - NIGHT.

Gary drives the family to the roadblock. A STATE POLICE OFFICER shines a flashlight into the car.

STATE POLICE OFFICER
Can I see some identification?

Gary obliges. Rose speaks from the backseat.

ROSE
How can they do this to people
on Christmas Eve?

CONNIE
(front he front seat)
Well, there is a criminal at large
and they can't stop for the holidays.

MARY
Maybe they'll catch him and then
let him go in the spirit of Christmas.

CONNIE
That's not the spirit of Christmas.
If you do something wrong you get
punished - that's what the
Bible says. When they catch him,
they're going to throw him in jail.
Who would catch a criminal and
let him go free?

MARY
Republicans?

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

C.U. on TV MONITOR. Huff enters his office with VIDEO OF THE ROBBERY BEGINS. O.S. there is a lot of noise and Huff gets up to close his door...

Outside his office, BOB BURLEY and his SUSPECTS are engaged in a heated debate, with police officers arbitrating.

POLICE OFFICER

Lt. Huff will be out momentarily
to take care of your problems...

The Salvation Army guy is incensed. Murray sits quietly in fear.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER OLD SAYBROOK HOME - NIGHT.

Santa is already eating his milk and cookies with the kids, as the adults chow down on an Italian buffet - of fried calamari and linguine with calms. Santa eyes them with desire.

FATHER

Maybe Santa would like some other food.

Santa is about to say something when the Children scream and cry:

CHILDREN

NO! NO! He only eats milk and cookies.

FATHER

O.K...O.K....Sorry Santa...

Pissed off, Santa tugs at the father sleeve and asks;

SANTA

You know, Santa could use a little
shot of something. To warm him up.
That sled is...is really cold.

CUT TO:

INT. CAROLINE AND LLOYD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Lloyd and Caroline are still bound but de-gagged. Jesse's hands are tied behind him to the bottom of an antique dresser. The bathroom door is closed. Caroline says sincerely to Lloyd;

CAROLINE

That was quite an outburst you had.
I've never heard you talk like that.
I should tie you up more often.

Lloyd doesn't answer. Jesse knows something is brewing.

INTERCUT;

INT. BATHROOM -

Gus uses some privacy to formulate a plan...He rinses his face.

GUS

This is Hell. Connecticut is
the fifth ring of Hell.

BACK TO BEDROOM;

Caroline continues;

CAROLINE

I want you to know I never said to
him you couldn't cut it. About the
restaurant, I mean. At least, I
didn't mean that. It's just that -
it was such a good time for
us...I never understood why
you gave up?

LLOYD

Let's just say I was realistic.
Someone had to be.

CAROLINE

(sincerely)
Was I so out of touch, Lloyd?

LLOYD

It doesn't matter anymore.

CAROLINE

Then why do you want to stay married?

Lloyd doesn't know what to say but Jesse responds (cloaking
his distress with apathy)

JESSE

You're splitting up?

Throughout this scene, JESSE IS SECRETLY MANIPULATING HIS HANDS
FREE FROM THE BINDS.

LLOYD

No...no it's...it's something
your mother likes to discuss.

JESSE

Well if you do, do I get let
out of prison?

LLOYD

No! And it's a military academy...I went..

JESSE

Yeah, for a summer! But I get sent
for my entire high school life
to "save the marriage". Well if you're
splitting up, what's the dif?

LLOYD

We're not splitting up and
who the hell are you to talk to
us like that?

CAROLINE

Lloyd don't...Jesse...

Gus exits to the bathroom, walking in on the family drama;

JESSE

Well it's true isn't it? You
thought I was the problem, so
I got shipped out. It's cool.

LLOYD

You were sent there because high
schools wouldn't enroll you anymore.

Gus, witnessing this exchange between Dad and Son, finds it
difficult to interrupt;

LLOYD

Because they were afraid of having
their students corrupted or
becoming victims of extortion.

JESSE

Yeah well what do you expect.
I'm just bad news, right Dad?

Gus notices Lloyd doesn't let the kid off the hook.

GUS

All right, knock it off you two.

But Lloyd is angry at his son's accusations (he's guilty);

LLOYD
How did you get home, anyway?

GUS
I said knock it off!

JESSE
I stole a car. What do you think?

Gus is uncomfortable by this scene.

GUS
HEY!

LLOYD
Well grand theft auto would be
the next step for you.

CAROLINE
(cries)
STOP IT - BOTH OF YOU!

Gus and the two men are jolted. Caroline is really upset.

CAROLINE
I'm sick of this constant sticking
it to each other! How can a father
and son talk like that? Now you're
father asked you a question - how
did you get home?

Gus lets Jesse answer;

JESSE
(quietly answers mother)
Lt. Huff picked me up.

GUS FREEZES. He turns white.

GUS
Who?

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

On the video monitor, Huff waits for the thief to remove his mask. Gus does and Huff freezes the frame. He looks at the image in disbelief

HUFF
Gus? You son of a bitch.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CAROLINE AND LLOYD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Gus is frantic;

GUS
Not Ben Huff from New York? Not
Ben Huff with the bum leg?

JESSE
Yeah - you know him?

Gus is banging his head against his gun.

GUS
WHAT ARE THE FUCKING ODDS...
I MEAN, WHAT ARE THE GODDAMN
CHANCES - CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS!
WHAT FUCKING STAR WAS I BORN UNDER!?

Gus starts TEARING APART THE BEDROOM IN A RAGE...until he takes
a PILLOW, STUFFS THE GUN INTO IT AND SHOOTs...The Chasseurs are
frightened. Jesse is fascinated - and HIS HANDS ARE NEARLY FREE.

Unfortunately, the pillow is set on fire from the shot and
GUS BURNS HIS HAND...

GUS
SONOFABITCHINBASTARDGODDAMNPRICK...

GUS DROPS THE GUN OUT OF HIS BURNT HAND. JESSE, FREE FROM THE
BONDS, SEIZES THE MOMENT BY FLYING OFF THE BED AND ONTO THE GUN.

CAROLINE/LLOYD
NO JESSE!!

Gus moves towards the gun but Jesse jumps to his feet, aiming
for Gus's head.

JESSE
All right - it's all over...
Untie my parents...

Gus stands there, cool, shaking his head;

GUS
Oh kid...what are you doing?

JESSE
UNTIE MY PARENTS! I MEAN IT!

CAROLINE
JESSE!...Lloyd, tell him to stop.

LLOYD
Jesse please...Just...call the police..

But Gus starts walking towards him. Frightened, Jesse starts backing up towards the phone...

JESSE
(nervous)
Stay right where you are...I'm warning you - I'll use this.

GUS
(cool)
Will you? Cause I'm going to keep walking. Can you get to the phone before I get to you?

Jesse's arm is shaking. He keeps back away, trying to head for the phone near the bed and keep his eye on Gus. But Gus keeps walking toward him slowly;

GUS
You know kid it's one thing to think about shooting a man - it's something else to pull the trigger and send a piece of lead ripping into a man's flesh.

JESSE
What do you think I learn at military school? Why do you think my father sent me there!
(babbling nervously)
You don't know about me - I'm surprised my father didn't say something about how much you remind him of me.

Caroline gives Lloyd a hurtful look. Lloyd feels badly that Jesse thinks this. JESSE BACKS UP. GUS KEEPS WALKING TOWARD HIM;

JESSE
STAY WHERE YOU ARE?

CAROLINE
JESSE PLEASE!

LLOYD
JUST GET TO THE PHONE!

JESSE ARRIVES AT the nightstand with THE PHONE at the same time GUS arrives right AT THE END OF THE GUN.

GUS

Now...can you dial before I
grab this gun from you? Cause
if you can't, you should shoot.

Jesse is a ball of sweat. Caroline can't bare watching.
Lloyd feels a surge of protection and love for his son.

GUS

Go ahead kid...Shoot.

Jesse gathers all his strength, trying to steady his shaking
arm. His face is a ball of sweat compared to Gus's cool stare.

THE PHONE RINGS.

Jesse is startled and with a swift, skillful move, GUS SNATCHES
THE GUN AWAY. Caroline is crying. Lloyd breathes gratefully.

GUS

Get over here.

Gus pulls Jesse back to the bed, then lifts up Caroline and
brings her to the phone. He unties her hand to let her pick
up the phone....Hanging his head, Jesse sits on the other
twin bed, away from his father

JESSE

I'm sorry. I couldn't do it.

LLOYD

It's all right. I would have been
more upset if you could have.

Lloyd means this as a compliment. But Jesse doesn't respond.
Caroline answers the phone as Gus sticks the gun in her;

CAROLINE (INTO PHONE)

Hello?

INTERCUT;

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT.

Connie stands outside the car at a pay phone.

CONNIE

Caroline. It's Connie...Listen
we got a little held up. We'll
be there in twenty minutes.

(sarcastic)

I hope the dinner isn't ruined.

INT. CAROLINE AND LLOYD'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER.

Jump cut a few moments later as Caroline hangs up.

CAROLINE

They'll be here in twenty minutes.

Gus thinks, then;

GUS

Call the police station and
ask for Murray Wallace. Tell them
he's a uncle and you expected him for
dinner an hour ago...

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT.

Huff exits his office with the tape. he is fully charged. He
has a mission. He is focused and determined. He stops a Young
Officer and orders;

HUFF

Get all available men in the
assignment room.
(to another Officer)
Get a Sketch Artist up here, pronto!
(to another Officer)
Get the news stations on the phone...

Huff barrels past Bob Burley, who stops him;

BOB

We have been waiting over an
hour for you. When are you going
to question these men!?

Huff looks at THE THREE SUSPECTS and instructs the only Officer
left without a task;

HUFF

Let them go.
(referring to Bob)
And lock him up!

Murray heads for the exit. Bob is outraged!

BOB

WHAT!

HUFF

For false arrest and interfering
with a police investigation...

BOB
I have the authority to assist
this department in any capacity
I see fit. And how do you know
it's a false arrest until you
investigate them?

HUFF
(in Bob's face)
Because I know the identity
of the wanted man BOB!
And you would have known that
had you contacted us before
detaining these innocent men BOB!

BOB
(nervous)
But I'm not an official authority.
It wasn't an official false arrest.
You can't lock me up for that.

HUFF
(loving this)
Then I guess I'll just lock you
up for being a butt tick.

The officer takes him away - passing by A RINGING DESK PHONE.
But everyone is too busy to answer it.

CUT TO;

INT. LLOYD AND CAROLINE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME.

CAROLINE
No one's answering.

Gus hangs up and comes to a grim realization.

GUS
All right. That's it.

Camera moves into C.U. of a troubled Gus;

GUS
Looks like I'm staying for the holidays.

CAROLINE
But how? Who do we say you are?

LLOYD GETS AN IDEA.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE ASSIGNMENT ROOM - NIGHT.

Huff enters the room with is a series of desk facing a blackboard and a large desk. Beside it, on a tall movable stand is a TV WITH VCR. HUFF PLACES THE TAPE INTO THE VCR. THE INTERCOM BUZZES; An Officer speaks;

OFFICER (V.O.)

Uh...Lt. Huff, there's a Will Warren here to see you from the Attorney General's office.

Huff pauses, then replies;

HUFF

I'll be right in.

He exits as TWO OFFICERS enter the room.

OFFICER ONE

You know what's going on?

OFFICER TWO

I don't know - I thought we were going home.

(Sits down and checks his watch)
Jesus...I'm going miss dinner.
Put the TV on.

The Second Officer turns on the TV and sits. "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" comes on the screen.

SECOND OFFICER

You know, I've never seen this whole movie?

FIRST OFFICER

Don't you live in this country!?

SECOND OFFICER

I've seen parts. You know, it's always at Christmas - between the kids and the family...I've never seen the whole thing.

FIRST OFFICER

Well, you ain't gonna see it now either.

Second Officer gets and idea. He rises and approaches the TV.

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

Huff is being reamed out by Warren.

WARREN

If I find out you had anything to do with the removal of that tape I will personally prosecute.

HUFF

I'm telling you - I don't know anything about it. Are you sure Willard put a tape in before he left?

WARREN

Yes. I spoke to him over an hour ago from the house. Mr. Willard is very upset. So upset, that he ordered his television station to immediately broadcast a special bulletin pledging a million dollar reward for evidence leading to an identification.

HUFF

WHAT!

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD SAYBROOK SQUARE - NIGHT.

The same pretty little street from the first frame of the movie, only now - instead of being filled with Christmas shoppers of good cheer - it's filled with Old Saybrook townies prowling the area for the Holiday Bandit - fathers and sons carrying baseball bats, mothers and daughters stalking store entrances with cans of mace...SUDDENLY, A BUNCH OF CRAZED TOWNEES STOP and turn toward the EIGHT FOOT COMMUNITY DECORATED SNOWMAN in the town square and, getting the same idea, attack it, en masse, with their bats and mace, thinking Gus might be hiding inside.

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

HUFF

I WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE
FOR WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS TOWN

WARREN

THIS IS NOT YOUR CONCERN...
MR. WILLARD IS A PERSONAL..

A Young Officer enters the room.

OFFICER

Lt. Huff - I have that sketch artist. You want him in the assignment room too?

Warren is immediately suspicious. Huff gets nervous.

CUT TO:

INT. MACKEREL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Murray watches from a table by a window, as the ANGRY MOB stop cars and pull out visiting Christmas guests as possible suspects. He downs his drink just as THE DRUNKEN MIDDLE AGED WOMAN sits.

LINDA

My name is Linda...You looked
like you could use another one.

She hands him another drink. Murray is grateful. Linda, looking out the window at the crazy mob, comments;

LINDA

Aren't the holidays nuts?
I mean, it's all about money...
I sometimes think if Jesus knew
what Christmas would become,
he woulda stayed home, got married
and made coffee tables....
You got any family?
(Murray shakes his head)
I have a fiance...He was supposed
to meet me here...

MURRAY

(empathetically)
He got held up?

LINDA

He got life for trying to kidnap
the head of Morgan Guaranty. He said
he wanted to get me a great wedding
present. I said, Ron, a pair of
earrings would have been fine. I
didn't need a CEO.
(sips her drink)

MURRAY

What are you doing here!?

LINDA

His family was from near here.
They won't see me. But Ron had
his boat docked here. We were
supposed to take it up to Canada
...Just the two of us...
Leave all this madness behind.

MURRAY

Your boat?

CUT TO:

INT. ASSIGNMENT ROOM - NIGHT.

Warren and his men stand by the TV with the VCR as the tape rewinds. Huff waits anxiously - as do the Two Officers who were watching IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE. One eyes the other apprehensively and the other replies with a curt "SSHHHH"... Warren arrogantly press PLAY and waits for the proof of Huff's interference. Huff thinks it's all over until;

ON THE TV MONITOR WE SEE; JIMMY STEWART and DONNA REED in the scene where Stewart refuses to ever get married, then breaks down and kisses Donna Reed passionately, as they stand over the telephone talking to "Sam Wainwright"

Huff is amazed. Warren is confused. The Two Officers hope they don't get in trouble. Some of the other officers get teary eyed.

CUT TO:

INT. LLOYD AND CAROLINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

THROUGHOUT THE SCENE, GUS IS TYING JESSE TO A CHAIR which sits inside the closet, using a ton of cords and sheets.

JESSE

(impressed)

You really had me, man. You didn't flinch.

(Gus continues tying him)

Can I ask you a professional question?

Why jewels? Why not cash or cars
or drugs?

GUS

I like beautiful things. It's not
just about money. The only reason
I want money is to get out of this
stinking country and live like a
human being on some uncivilized island.

JESSE

You think you'll get out of this one?

GUS

No comment.

JESSE

You got a plan?

GUS

No com-... hey listen, I'm not here to be your buddy. I'm tying you up cause you're a wildcard and I don't play with wildcards.

JESSE

We are very much alike, ya know. Except jewels aren't my thing. Blackmail, extortion - selling test questions, little bit of this, little bit of that... I have quite a bit of money. I was saving it for something else, but you can have it.

GUS

(not believing him)
Why?

JESSE

To help you get outta of here. Grease a little palms to look the other way....The money's yours - if you take me with you.

GUS

This is like some warped fucking Huckleberry Finn story - take you with me? What am I a circus? Get outta here!

JESSE

I can be an asset.

GUS

You know, I don't get you rich kids. You got everything going for you and you wind up getting into worse shit than kids I know who live on the street -

JESSE

Who are you to talk? You're...

GUS

I'm nobody - I steal, I run, I hide that's my entire fucking life.

(sincerely)

Do you have any idea how tired I am? You've got a home here - You got every opportunity to...

JESSE

Oh CAN IT! What do you think,
just because of some zip code
your life is set? Lincoln
was born in a log cabin -
Leopold and Loeb were born in
one of the richest suburbs of
Chicago - if you're bad, you're
bad - that's all there is to it.
(Gus looks at him with disbelief)
And I'm bad. Just ask my Dad.

GUS

(sympathetic)
Yeah well, I know all about that.
Whenever I got into trouble
or did something wrong, my dad
would call me a criminal. I remember
being eight and taking a pen off
his desk and he said "only criminals
take things that aren't theirs".

JESSE

I once took a comic book from a drugstore
and my dad turned me in. I had to spend
the afternoon in a sheriff's office.

GUS

Mine sent me to reform school, but
I ran away when I was thirteen.

JESSE

You ran away at thirteen? Woah,
that is great!

GUS

What's so fuckin great about it?
You have any idea what it's like
being 13 with no family to count
on. Feeling like nobody in the whole
world is even thinking about you.

JESSE

Did your parents ever try and find you?

GUS

I don't know. And I'll never know.
You got a family kid, for better
or worse. You got blood ties -
don't mess with that....Open your mouth.

He gags Jesse then closes the closet door on him and locks it.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER.

Caroline and Lloyd wait. Gus unlocks the door and enters.

GUS

All right, we haven't got much time.
Rules of the house;

MONTAGE ; AS THE THREE PRINCIPLES PREPARE THE HOUSE narrated by
Gus in V.O.;

GUS (V.O.)

No phones except in the kitchen downstairs.

- PHONE PLUGS ARE PULLED OUT OF WALLS and stored away.

GUS (V.O.)

No television. Tell'em the cable's out.

- CABLE LINES ARE PULLED OUT OF THE WALLS.

GUS (V.O.)

Nobody up here near this bedroom in
case your son sneezes or something.

- GUS LOCKS CAROLINE and LLOYD'S BEDROOM.

GUS (V.O.)

We are one unit. I want the two of
you together in front of me at all
times. That means whatever your
serving, has to be on the table.
No going into the kitchen for
last minute things.

- Caroline and Lloyd set food on table as Gus puts on one of
Lloyd's sports jackets...Once on, he says to Caroline and Lloyd;

GUS

O.K...How's this?

LLOYD

Dr. Wong, I presume?

CUT TO:

INT. LT. SISKEL'S HOME - DAY.

Camera angles on two adorable fat children who are opening
the presents with squeals of delight. Their MOTHER, a picture
perfect wife with a frilly apron over a frilly holiday dress,
taking videos of her family....

MOTHER

Go on kids, sit near daddy.

The children run to their father's lap. Siskel sits in his in a big armchair with unwrapped presents around. HE LOOKS SAD.

MOTHER

Say something to the camera....
thank Daddy.

SON

Thank you Daddy....You're the best.

DAUGHTER

We love you Daddy...thank you for
our presents and thank you for being
such a great daddy....

Suddenly, the MOTHER enters the frame and looks into camera
(as if she placed the video camera down and ran in front of it)

MOTHER

And I just want to say that
there's isn't a woman luckier
on earth than me...I thank the
Lord for my beautiful children
and my wonderful, strong, loving
husband...I love you so much...

Everyone starts kissing Siskel. Camera moves slowly into C.U.
of SISKEL, WHO FEELS LIKE A GUILTY PIECE OF SHIT.

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR HOUSE

Caroline and Lloyd continue explaining Dr. Wong to Gus;

LLOYD

...And there's the "no namecalling" thing...

CAROLINE

Oh, and "there's no blanketing" -
that means saying things like
he "never" does this or he "always"
does that...

THE DOORBELL RINGS. Gus rises with his gun and peeks through
the windows.

GUS

There are cops at the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHASSEUR HOUSE - NIGHT.

PHIL and STEVE, wait patiently for the door to open.
A beat later, a nervous Lloyd opens the door.

LLOYD

Phil. Steve. Merry Christmas.

PHIL

Merry Christmas, Lloyd. We were
on our way home and we thought
we might catch Gary...

STEVE

Yeah, we thought we had to work
tonight but turns out we don't.

INTERCUT;

INT. HALL CLOSET -

Caroline and Gus whispering in the closet;

GUS

Who's Gary?

CAROLINE

My brother-law...they all grew up together.

INTERCUT FRONT DOOR & INT. CLOSET;

LLOYD

No..He..he..won't be here for hours.
You know what a lousy driver Gary is.

STEVE

Plus the roadblocks...They're even
thinking about calling in the Coast
Guard now.

Gus is really pissed. He can't contain his anger. HE BANGS HIS
HEAD AGAINST THE CLOSET WALL, much to Caroline's dismay.
Phil hears the knocking and:

PHIL

Is that Caroline? I'd love to say hello?

LLOYD

(panics)

Uh...no..

(Phil is confused)

LLOYD
I mean that wasn't Caroline...It was...
the ...wind...the wind in the ...
(Lloyd can't think)
...willows...in the yard...

Phil and Steve look suspiciously to Lloyd, which totally unnerves Lloyd, so:

LLOYD
Of course you can say hello - come in..

In the closet, Gus sees red. Caroline is fearful.
Lloyd leads the two cops through the foyer;

LLOYD
Caroline's upstairs. I'll go get her.
Would you like a cup of coffee?
Right in the kitchen - help yourselves.

COPS
Great. Thanks.

The cops exit to the kitchen just as, GUS'S HAND COMES OUT OF THE CLOSET and PULLS LLOYD IN.

INSIDE THE CLOSET, they speak quickly in loud whispers;

GUS
What the hell do you think you're doing?

CAROLINE
Really Lloyd!

LLOYD
(defensive, denying the mistake)
It would have caused more suspicion
to say no.

GUS
You never admit when you're wrong, do you?

CAROLINE
Finally, someone said it beside me!

LLOYD
Shut-up. There was no other alternative.

CAROLINE
I could have been in the shower.
I could have been dressing...

LLOYD
Well you made a noise! I panicked.

CAROLINE
You have to use your imagination, Lloyd.

LLOYD
What is this, a Lying Workshop!
Gus bangs their heads together to shut them up!

GUS
(to Caroline)
You go in with them
find some way to get rid of'em.
Lloyd stays with me...We'll
be right outside the kitchen door -
I can hear everything.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET IN MASTER BEDROOM - DAY.
Jesse is already struggling to get free.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME.
Caroline, pouring Phil coffee when; THE PHONE RINGS.
INTERCUT- GUS and LLOYD'S REACTION.

In the kitchen, Caroline stares at it, not wanting to pick up,

STEVE
Aren't you going to answer that?
Caroline nods and picks up;

CAROLINE
Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. MACKEREL LOUNGE - SAME TIME.
Murray, on the phone, speaks cautiously;

MURRAY
Gus? Who the hell is this!?

INTERCUT LOUNGE/CHASSUER HOUSE

CAROLINE

Uh..hi...how are you? Are you
feeling better?

MURRAY

Who cares a rat's asshole how I feel?
Where's Gussie?

CAROLINE

Hold on, I'll go get him.

SHE PLACES THE PHONE ON IT'S SIDE, WITHOUT HANGING UP;

CAROLINE

I'll be right back...

She exits. MEANWHILE; the two cops resume their conversation,
which the off-the-hook PHONE CAN PICK UP;

PHIL

Man,...That Huff is some pain in the
ass...Imagine thinking of making
us work on Christmas Eve. I mean
we're cops but ya know we have needs!

STEVE

Yeah..Except I'd love to be the one
to bag this bandit guy. What a
creep - robbing people during holidays.

PHIL

I know - he's slime.

INTERCUT MURRAY LISTENING IN HORROR AT THE OTHER END...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY.

Caroline and Lloyd is hurriedly plugging in another phone while
Gus waits for it to connect. Finally;

GUS

Murray!

Murray is so spooked - HE HANGS UP THE PHONE. Gus is confused as
he holds the phone.

GUS

He hung up!

CAROLINE
He sounded upset.

GUS
He should be. He's gonna die a
horrible death.

THE FRONT DOORBELL RINGS:

All three look through the window down to the front door.

EXT. CHASSEUR HOUSE - NIGHT.

CUT TO:

Rose, Gary, Connie and the kids are waiting impatiently.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME.

Phil is having his coffee. Steve is on the phone with his wife:

STEVE (on the phone)
O.K..I'll pick up the milk and
doughnuts but I'm not buying
wine for your brother - Forget
it Marge - he can suck on grapes.
Oh..wait a minute - they got another
call coming in...
(He pushes the hang-up bar)
Hello?

INTERCUT a frightened MURRAY ON THE BOAT.

MURRAY (on the phone)
Gus? Was that you?

STEVE
No..This is Lt. Milford. To whom am I speaking?

PANIC! Again, MURRAY HANGS UP.

STEVE
Honey...o.k..I'm on my way.
(hangs up)
Sorry, Phil but I gotta get going.

Gary enters;

GARY (O.S.)
Aww really!

STEVE/PHIL

GARE!

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT HALL - SAME TIME.

Caroline is taking her Rose's coat as everyone enters; The kids drops their coats and run O.S., Connie organizes their bags.

ROSE

Why was the door locked?
You knew we were coming.

CAROLINE

Well, you know, that thief is
still at large...Hi Connie..
You and Gary and the kids are
in the den downstairs, and Mom,
I'll bring your bag to your
room upstairs.

ROSE

I'll bring it. I want to change my shoes.

John and Mary enter, already annoyed;

JOHN

The T.V.'s are broke. What are
we gonna do all night?

Connie smacks his head;

CONNIE

Celebrate the birth of Christ!
Put the presents under the tree.

Gary enters through the dining room with Phil and Steve.

GARY

Connie, look who dropped by.

As they all exchange hugs and greetings. Rose climbs to the top
of the stairs to find GUS standing above her.

ROSE

Who are you?

Lloyd appears at his side.

LLOYD

Mom, hi!...Merry Christmas...

He kisses her and takes her bags as Caroline watches from downstairs, remembering Gus' rule that all three must always be in eye view.;

ROSE
Merry Christmas who is this!?

LLOYD
This is that doctor we were telling
you about...Dr. Wong.

ROSE
The marriage doctor?

LLOYD
Right.

ROSE
(inspecting him, suspiciously)
Wong? You're a Wong?

GUS
My mother was Irish.

ROSE
And your father?

GUS
(cool)
Wasn't.

A stand-off... Caroline doesn't move. Lloyd suggests;

LLOYD
I'll put your bags away Mom, why don't
you go downstairs...

ROSE
I want to change my shoes.

LLOYD
Your shoes are lovely.

ROSE
My feet hurt!

LLOYD
Then take them off. Go barefoot!
A Bohemian Christmas. I'm up for that!

ROSE
What the hell is wrong with you?

ROSE
Why do you always get strange at
family gatherings?

LLOYD
(Confides in her)
Caroline is a little nervous about
the dinner. Maybe you could help.
Go see what you think.

Rose looks down the stairs to Caroline. Lloyd deals the final
card to his mother;

LLOYD
You know what an awful cook she is?

ROSE
All right.

She turns and starts down the stairs. Immediately, Lloyd and
Gus start down the stairs behind her. Rose stops - unnerved;

ROSE
Aren't you going to put my bags away?

LLOYD
Later.

ROSE
(starts back up)
Then I'll do it.

LLOYD
(blocks her)
No...I'll do it, I...I just
wanted to be with you.

Rose looks at him like he's nuts, then looks at Gus.

GUS
He loves you so very much.

Rose is more unnerved and heads down the stairs...

THE PHONE IN THE KITCHEN RINGS;

Gus nudges Lloyd back upstairs. He eyes Caroline to follow...

GUS
Oh..uh..Caroline, come up here
a minute will you?

CAROLINE

O.K..

Hurries up stairs past Rose, who stops her.

ROSE

I thought you needed help in the kitchen?

CAROLINE

Well, everything's in the dining room. Why don't you light the candles, that would be good?

Caroline passes her up the stairs. Rose continues down, mumbling;

ROSE

Bitch.

At the same time, Caroline mumbles to herself.

CAROLINE

Bitch

She reaches the second floor and then, as a unit, ALL THREE DELIVER ROSE'S BAG TO their bedroom;

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY.

The phone is plugged in and Caroline says;

CAROLINE

Hello?

Caroline nods and gives phone to Gus.

GUS

Murray?

INTERCUT MURRAY IN BAR;

MURRAY

How do I know this is Gus?

GUS

Cause I'm gonna give you a second asshole if hang up on me again!

MURRAY

Kid...I got good news.
A friend of mine's got a boat - a beauty.

MURRAY

Practically a yacht.
Her fiance's in jail. I promised her
ten grand, no questions asked. I
figured we could hock a couple of trinkets.

GUS

How do you know she won't turns us in?

MURRAY

Cause she's skipped parole herself
in Jersey...They ever find her,
she's back serving time. Believe me,
she's legit. She knows a lot of
New York people - Louie Lipsky,
Carmine Big Ears, Jerry Lambskin....

GUS

O.K...O.k....

MURRAY

The thing is she's can't leave
before one o'clock because she
owes the dock guy money and
she can't get the boat if he's
around - the guy closes up shop
at 12;30.

GUS

O.k...I'll be there

They hang up. Caroline and Lloyd await the news;

GUS

If you can get me to the harbor at
one o'clock, it's finished.
(Caroline and Lloyd look hopeful)
Now let's get this dinner over with.

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

A disillusioned Huff sits behind his desk, drinking from a
bottle of J.D. The police station is cleared out, except for
one or two uniformed men watching the phones and the TV from
the assignment room, which they rolled out into the main room.
Bob Burley and Will Warren burst into Huff's office;

WARREN

I've instructed your men to hit the
streets at 11;45 in preparation of

WARREN

the curfew. Any violators will be brought in immediately. At midnight your men will assist my men in house to house searches until he is found. During these searches, my men will have complete authority - if you have any questions, you ask them. You are temporarily suspended until a full investigation has been completed. Do you understand?! Mr. Willard has agreed to suspend his reward offer, once he knew we were here to handle things. Bob here, who happens to be a personal friend of mine, told me you claimed to know the identity of the man at large. Is there anything you want to tell me?

(Huff ignores him)

If we lose this opportunity to catch this guy, the Attorney General will hold you personally responsible.

He exits. Bob offers is last licks, trying to sound tough.

BOB

You can expect to hear from my lawyers. You're history buddy - fuckhead.

HUFF

Bob! Do people at the country club know you use the F-word?

Bob storms out. Huff takes another shot, when he hears his door open again. SISKEL ENTERS;

SISKEL

Are you Lt. Huff?

(Huff doesn't answer)

I was looking for the officer in charge.

Huff stares at him and figures this will be one of his last official duties.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE OFFICER PHIL'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Santa (a.k.a George) is handing out toys to Phil's kids as Phil gets off the phone and speaks to his wife.

PHIL

I don't believe this..That was
the precinct. I'm back on duty tonight.

WIFE/RELATIVES

Oh no...Tonight?! Really?

PHIL

I'm sure glad I got a chance to
see Santa though...

The kids cheer. A slightly inebriated Santa puts an arm around
Phil and suggests;

SANTA

And Santa would like to toast
you for answering the call of
duty on this holiest of nights...

Santa grabs a GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE from a buffet table.

SANTA

Everyone - grab a glass...

The relatives wonder if this is a good idea or not, in front
of the children. ONE BOY SUGGESTS;

BOY

Santa doesn't drink champagne.
Santa drinks milk.

SANTA

(curtly)

Santa can't drink anymore milk
tonight. Santa has a lactose
intolerance and it gives him
horrible gas pains. You want
to see Santa farting down
everyone's chimney?

No one knows how to respond to this. Santa downs the champagne.

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR DINING ROOM - LATER.

The scene is startling - nine people seated at a formal dining
table, wearing CANDLE WREATHS around their heads. No one speaks.
The candles are all lit and Caroline explains the tradition -
wearing a Swedish peasant smock.

CAROLINE

We are having a Scandinavian family Christmas roast with fresh baked Kringlors, seven day old traditional Lutfish and Lamb Gookins.

Everyone is disgusted already.

CAROLINE

I'm sure you all must be wondering about my outfit and the head wreathes...

ROSE

You mean, why you look like a waitress at the House of Pancakes.

Connie conceals a giggle behind a cough. Lloyd says nothing in her defense. Gus notices this.

CAROLINE

O.K...What you are wearing on your heads are called Lucia wreaths. We wear them in honor of Lucia, a brave and noble woman I admire very much. A woman whose beliefs were so strong, they rendered her inflammable,

Everyone looks at her like she's one marble short.

CAROLINE

This smock is an original Swedish peasant smock worn by women who carried jugs of milk for miles and miles on a yolk.

John whispers to Mary;

JOHN

Too bad you can't see her jugs.

CAROLINE

Well dig in everyone....don't be shy.

CAMERA PERUSES AN ASSORTMENT OF DISGUSTING DISHES. John and Mary whisper to each other.

MARY

Did you eat your hamburger at Hojos?

John nods as if to say "Absolutely". Mary looks forlorn.

CAROLINE
Mary, try the Lutfish. It's been
sitting in salt for seven days.

MARY
Mmmm...my favorite.

LLOYD
Everything looks great honey.

CAROLINE
Thank you sweetheart.

Connie, Rose and Gary exchange looks of incredulity - Caroline and Lloyd are never this nice to each other. As everyone starts to eat, Rose keeps her eye on "DR. WONG";

ROSE
Where's your son?

CAROLINE
He's Lloyd's son too.
And he decided to stay at
school and finish a paper
he's working on.

Rose clearly doesn't believe this.

ROSE
Mmmm.
(then;)
It seems that this therapy is
working...
(as she picks at her food)
I've never seen these two
so agreeable together what
the hell am I eating?

CAROLINE
A parsnip kringlor....they date
back from the early twelfth century.

ROSE
Tastes like it.

She spits it out into a napkin. Caroline wants to kill her.
Gus keeps his eye on Rose and Caroline, as the tension brews.

GARY
Well I think this therapy
is great. Maybe you and me
should do it, Connie.

CONNIE

(correcting him)
We don't have problems Gary,
we have each other.

CAROLINE

Well the problems are just the
surface, it's really about
communicating.

ROSE

(to Gus)
So, I assume you've discussed
Caroline's adultery.

Silence. Lloyd almost chokes. Caroline didn't know she knew.
Even Gus get nervous.

CAROLINE

(astounded)
You told your mother?!

LLOYD

(uncomfortable, defensive)
No...She sort of.....got the
information out of me.

ROSE

You make it sound like I forced you.
The truth is he was very upset and
he needed someone he could trust to
talk to.

Caroline feels betrayed. She stares at Lloyd who avoids her
by looking into his plate. Rose asks Gus...

ROSE

Tell me something - in your professional
opinion, should these two be married?

LLOYD

Mother!

ROSE

(Acting like the only normal person)
I'm just trying to understand...

Lloyd recognizes himself in his mother and doesn't like it.

ROSE

We're all family. You argue
in front of everyone - why can't we talk

ROSE
in front of everyone?

CAROLINE
(angry)
Because it isn't "everyone's" business.

Caroline rises to leave but Gus reminds her;

GUS
Caroline.

She looks at him and slowly sinks to her seat. Connie, Gary and Rose wonder about this.

CONNIE
Is that part of the therapy?
She can't leave.

Caroline, annoyed at Gus for the moment, pours herself some wine, egging him on;

CAROLINE
Yes Dr. Wong - explain your treatment.

Gus wants to kill her. But, he makes the best of it.

GUS
Well...it's common sense really.
You don't accomplish anything
by leaving. The point is to stay
and...and...talk it out.

LLOYD
(changes the subject)
These lamb coosins are great honey.

CAROLINE
They're gookins, not coosins...
(angrily)
sweetheart!

GUS
(warning)
Caroline.

ROSE
Where I was born doctor, love was not such a
personal matter. My marriage was arranged
in fact. My husband came from the next
town and our parents wanted to join farms.

GUS
Oh...What kind of farms?

CAROLINE
Pigs!

Caroline downs her wine glass and pours another.

ROSE
Actually, it was truffles.

Lloyd tries to get the bottle away from Caroline.

LLOYD
Caroline, may I have the wine?

Caroline downs another glass, then pours the rest out.

CAROLINE
It's empty - you have to get another bottle.

SUDDENLY, ALL THREE (CAROLINE, GUS AND LLOYD) STAND UP and exit into the kitchen.

ROSE
Where are they all going?

CONNIE
(causing trouble)
That doctor's cute - I think it's a little strange they're all together here.

JOHN
You think they're having a menage a trois?

Connie smacks him.

CONNIE
Don't talk dirty at the Christmas table.

MARY
This stuff tastes like ear wax.

Disgusted, Gary stops in mid-chew.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME.

Caroline and Lloyd argue in a whisper as Lloyd gets more wine.

LLOYD

No more wine for you!

CAROLINE

I can't believe you won't discuss it at our marriage counselors but you'll talk about it to that bitch.

LLOYD

Hey, she's my mother!

GUS

She's a fucking bitch, Lloyd...
Not for nothing -

LLOYD

You're not supposed to offer opinions remember? You just supposed nod a lot and think up useless exercises!

CAROLINE

No...Thank you so much Gus.
Finally somebody else sees.

GUS

You have to be fuckin deaf dumb and blind not to see..

LLOYD

Let's just get out there and change the subject.

CAROLINE

Oh fine - why didn't we change the subject before I was humiliated? This is it Lloyd - After I drop Gus off, I'm driving home to New York and I'm filing for divorce no matter what you say!

She grabs the bottle and exits. Gus and Lloyd exchange a look.

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT.

Huff is in a drunken stream of consciousness as Siskel, losing his patience, waits to be heard. Huff is full of self pity;

HUFF

...Yeah, 13 years in New York.
You know what it means to be a cop when your a cop in New York.

HUFF

Sure you don't want a drink?

SISKEL

No. Really - I don't have much time. I...

HUFF

I was dedicated. I loved the city, the excitement, the pace... Until my accident.

SISKEL

Lt. Huff, may I please speak to about a very personal....

HUFF

It happened when I was working the Bronx. There was this gang of kids. Called themselves The Hoods...Broke into everything - apartments, liquor stores, electronics stores - they had some business going. I had one in my hands on the roof of 112 178th St. I'll never forget it.

(stands up and acts it out)

I had him in a headlock, like this. Kid relaxes. Says he gives up. I relax my grip for a second to pull out my cuffs and, I don't know how he did it, but he pulls this piece of cardboard out from under my feet, throws me off balance and pushes me over into an alley four stories below. Landed right on my knee. I felt too vulnerable after that. You don't know what it means to be vulnerable until you're vulnerable in New York. So I come to a small town thinking I can still be a good cop somewhere. Figured I'd be like the sheriff, ya know. People walking down Main Street would say "Morning Lt. Huff"...everyone would know my name. I'd get homemade cakes from the local spinster and have a secret affair with the town school teacher. I'd be the respected guardian and protector. Instead, I get a bunch of stuck up fucking ingrates who want my ass roasted over a spit..I hate small fucking towns.

(an after-thought, sincerely)

I am a good cop ya know.

Finally, an opening for Siskel;

SISKEL

I believe you. Which is why I need your help and only your help - now may I please explain my situation?

HUFF

(leans back in his chair)
Shoot.

SISKEL

Thank you. Now it's a very delicate situation and I ask you to keep this in the utmost confidence...Uh, I know a great many people all over the state and if you can help with this..problem, in a private and confidential manner, I assure you I will do whatever I can to have you reassigned - anywhere you like. I can do that. The governor is a personal friend of mine.

HUFF

(interested)
What's this all about?

SISKEL

Well...There's a boy who lives in this town....

Huff can already guess what boy he means....

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET - SAME TIME.

Jesse is a mass of sweat - his body is drenched and slippery. He has more maneuverability but he still isn't free...He thinks. Then, HE HOLDS BREATH AS LONG AS HE CAN, EXPANDING HIS BODY AT THE SAME TIME....He rests. Then REPEATS the effort...He tries to move his hands - THE BINDINGS ARE LOOSER. He begins to set himself free.

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

Camera pans down the table as everyone picks at their food, trying not to notice what's going on at the end of the table; Caroline is drinking herself into a stupor - she sits there explaining to Gus what happened to her life;

CAROLINE

(happy memories)

...I was pregnant with Jesse. Lloyd was working as assistant banquet manager at the Sheraton during the day and an assistant cook three nights a week at a soulfood restaurant in the village. I made some extra money typing resumes and reports. Lloyd wouldn't take any money from his family. I thought that was so attractive. We lived in tiny one bedroom. I thought when the baby came I'd have to put it in a drawer.

Mary is genuinely interested. Gus can sense this is heading for trouble but he isn't sure what to do yet;

MARY

Then what happened?

ROSE

Oh who cares? Is this Christmas holiday conversation?

LLOYD

(calm Lloyd voice)

Caroline maybe you should eat something.

CAROLINE

(same calm "Lloyd" voice)

Lloyd, maybe you should eat me.

Everyone is shocked, except for John and Mary who are loving this as Caroline goes right on with her remembrances;

CAROLINE

I remember having dinner ready for Lloyd in between shifts and making love in the mornings because he was too tired at night.

CONNIE

(embarrassed)

Kids, go into the living room.

JOHN

I want to stay!

Connie smacks him. Gus doesn't like to see that.

CONNIE

Go into the living room I said!
This is not a conversation for children.

ROSE

It's not a conversation for adults
either.

(She rises to leave)

LLOYD

Where are you going?

ROSE

Up to my room to lie down.
Wake me when we open presents.

GUS

Why don't we do that now and then
everyone can get to bed early.

(they all look at him)

You must be tired from the drive.

CONNIE

We can't open presents until midnight.

GUS

Why not?

CONNIE

Because it's not Christmas until
midnight.

She glares at Gus. Gus glares back at her.

CAROLINE

It all started to turn to shit when
Lloyd's father died and she bribed
Lloyd to move back to Connie-....

LLOYD

(rising)

Why don't we all go into the living
room and I'll put on some music and
we can have our dessert, huh....
What's for dessert honey?

Caroline scowls at him, and says;

CAROLINE

You phony bastard. You hypocritical...

GUS SHOUTS IMPULSIVELY;

GUS
NO NAMECALLING!

Everyone wonders about this. Until Caroline retreats, like a vicious snake coiling back under a rock. Gus is impressed.

GUS
Now - I want everyone in the living room for music and dessert! Caroline, Lloyd and I will help you in the kitchen

CONNIE
Oh no, the men should sit and let the women takes care of getting....

Gus is losing his patience with her;

GUS
Connie, sit down! Sit!

Connie is shocked. Gary and the kids sit with open jaws.

CONNIE
Excuse me but I am not one of your patients.

Gus leans in threateningly;

GUS
You're gonna be somebody's patient if you don't get your butt back in that chair.

CONNIE
Gary, are you going to let him talk to me like that?

GARY
Well, hon, he is a doctor.

GUS
Now I am going into the kitchen to get dessert and coffee, and then we're opening presents. NOW! Not at midnight! Why - because we're adults and we can open presents anytime we like.

CONNIE
What about the children?

MARY
Mom I don't believe in Santa
Claus and that stuff.

JOHN
Me neither.

CONNIE
(shocked, really upset)
When did this happen? When did
you stop believing Santa Claus
came every year?

MARY
The day cramps started coming
every month.

INT. KITCHEN -

Gus is trying to snap Caroline out of it as Lloyd pours her some
coffee.

GUS
You're gonna blow this Caroline.
Get a grip.

LLOYD
Here, have some coffee.

CAROLINE
GO TO HELL MAMA'S BOY!

GUS
Caroline I mean it - cut it out!

CAROLINE
(daring, fearlessly drunk)
Or what? You're gonna shoot me?
Go ahead. You think death scares me!
You forget buddy - I'VE BEEN
MARRIED FOR HIM FIFTEEN YEARS!

Lloyd takes offense. Caroline flays her arms out;

CAROLINE
TAKE ME OUT - GO AHEAD - TAKE
YOUR BEST SHOT..

Gus grabs her and muffles her mouth.

GUS
Are you forgetting I have your

GUS

son upstairs!

Caroline remembers herself and pulls it together.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Gus and Lloyd enter with a tray of coffee, cups and plates.
Caroline enters with AN ORANGE CAKE with GREEN SPIRALS through
it. The family winces;

JOHN

What's that?

CAROLINE

It's an orange marzipan cake with
creme de menthe and lime zest.

ROSE

Ew...sounds too sweet.

CAROLINE

THEN DON'T EAT IT.

She drops the cake from two feet above the table and it lands
kerplop. She heads for the bar. Rose is feeling a certain
triumph - Caroline's behaviors merely confirms Rose is right
about her. Gus pulls out the cigarettes and starts smoking!

LLOYD

How about some music? I have
a Stevie Wonder sings Christmas
songs CD.

GARY

Got any Nat King Cole?

CONNIE

Gary loves Nat King Cole.

CAROLINE

(Snotty voice)

"Gee you know each other so well."

Gag me!

(to Gus)

Give me a cigarette.

Gus gives her one and lights it.

ROSE

Smoking again I see...So Dr. Wong -
is this progress?

GUS

(Doesn't like her)
Yes it is actually. Caroline
is, as we say in the profession,
"lying in her truthful wet spot".
A little messy but it's honest.

CAROLINE

That was very good.

GUS

Thank you.

Caroline just stares at Rose as the latter talks to Gus.

ROSE

Well please smoke near a window -
the smell nauseates me...

(to Gus)

And as far as your explanation goes,
it seems to be a clever way
of saying she's nasty and abusive
to my son. She's already ruined his
life, I can attest to that. My poor
son has had to endure such heartache
because of that woman - I don't know
why he didn't leave her years ago.

CAROLINE

Lady, why don't you just sleep
with him and let us all off the hook!

CONNIE

Oh my God.

ROSE

HOW DARE YOU!?

LLOYD

Let's open presents!

Silence. Even for Lloyd, this is a big denial.

LLOYD

I mean, what's the point of
getting into all this huh?
Caroline? You've made your
decision.

Caroline senses Lloyd is being serious and direct.

ROSE
What decision?

LLOYD
Caroline's leaving me. We're...
(Caroline waits for him to say:)
getting a divorce.

Connie covers her mouth in shock. The kids are loving the drama.
Rose is speechless. But Gary feels badly.

GARY
Aw...why?

Everyone looks at him like he's nuts.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER OLD SAYBROOK HOME - NIGHT.

George, the neighborhood Santa, is being shoved out the door.
IN THE BACKGROUND WE HEAR SCREAMING, CRYING CHILDREN.

PARENT
Now get the hell home George
before we call the police.

Santa is drunk to the gills.

SANTA
You know how hard this job is!?
You know how many fucking cookies
and milk I have to eat while you
people are shoveling down antipasto
and baked calms!

AN O.S. CHILD CRIES OUT;

CHILD (O.S.)
SANTA WAS MEAN TO ME!

SANTA
(yelling back at kid)
YEAH, WELL MAYBE SANTA WON'T
COME BACK NEXT YEAR..MAYBE HIM
AND THE EASTER BUNNY'LL TAKE
A FUCKING CRUISE TO JAMAICA
AND YOU CAN EAT YOUR OWN LOUSY COOKIES!

The Parent pushes him out and closes the door. Santa grumbles
to himself as he stands by a tree and pulls his zipper down
to take a piss.

Across the street, we can see a LITTLE GIRL in her pajamas peeking out of her window. She sees Santa and, without hearing her, SHE SCREAMS and runs away from the window.

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSUER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

Instead of a Christmas CD, Caroline has an atonal Jazz recording playing on the CD player - a dark, erratic, depressing. She sits before the player with a drink and an astray of THREE LIT CIGARETTES all going.

CONNIE

Can we please change the music?

Caroline glowers at her and LIGHTS ANOTHER CIGARETTE.

Meanwhile, everyone else is opening presents, ignoring her. Mary pulls out a A SWEATSHIRT WITH FAUX JEWELS SEWN INTO THE SHAPE OF A PUPPY. She whispers to John beside her;

MARY

Great. I always wanted to look like a nouveau riche housewife with bad taste.

JOHN

Now all you need are sunglasses that are five times the size of your face.

From across the room, Rose smiles and asks;

ROSE

Do you like it Mary?

MARY

Oh yes...It's really neat...

JOHN

Cool Grandma...

Lloyd is near the tree handing out presents...

LLOYD

Here Connie, this is for you...
Gary, here's yours...Oh this is for Jesse...

Caroline looks up at the mention of her son's name.

LLOYD

We'll just put his aside.

Caroline looks pleadingly to Gus, who sips his coffee, over-

looking the proceedings;

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET IN MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT.

The chair stands empty, the bindings lay across it. Camera pans over to Jesse, trying to open the lock from the inside.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM;

Connie opens a gift - A PAIR OF ISOTONER SLIPPERS.

CONNIE

Isotoner slippers...Oh, I have
wanted these for so long.

Thank you Mom.

(whispers to Gary)

With all her money - what does she
think, she's gonna take it with her?

GARY

(whispers back)

I think that's the plan.

Rose opens her gift - a new pocketbook.

ROSE

Oh, isn't that nice...Thank you
Connie and Gary and Mary and John..

LLOYD

And uh...here's our gift Mom...
to put in the bag.

He hands Rose an envelope. IT IS A CHECK. He whispers;

LLOYD

Another payment on the loan.

ROSE

Thank you Lloyd....Of course,
we'll have to see what happens
with interest rates under Clinton.

Caroline hears this and in a semi-drunken stupor, states the obvious;

CAROLINE

Cocksucker.

The room goes silent. John and Mary bite their tongues from laughing. Connie asks Gary.

CONNIE

What did she say?

JOHN

She said...

(Connie smacks him)

Gus gets worried. He leans down to Caroline and whispers;

GUS

Get a grip kid...

Caroline whispers back with great courage and resolution;

CAROLINE

If you need a hostage, you take
me. You leave my son alone - understand?

Gus is impressed by Caroline clarity and courage. He nods.
Caroline then adds, with deep feeling and vulnerability.

CAROLINE

And I can't leave without getting
a few things off my chest. Please Gus.

Gus is touched by her plea. And he understands. He smiles, then;

GUS

All right everybody, listen up!
Caroline has a few things to say.

LLOYD

(surprised)
What?

ROSE

No one cares what she has to say, Dr. Wong.

GUS

You know something lady, I've only
known you for a few hours and
I can tell you - I already want to
you dead.

JOHN

Woah,

Connie smacks him. Gus turns on her;

GUS

And you hit that kid one more time, and I'm going to make you eat that cake through both ends!

CONNIE

(to Gary)

Aren't you going to say anything?

GARY

Well he's got a point honey - you do hit a lot.

Connie hits him.

GUS

Caroline - the floor's yours.

LLOYD

This isn't fair. How come she gets to talk!?

GUS

How come we didn't hear from you before - when your wife was being ragged on by your truffle sniffing pig-mom!

CONNIE

What kind of therapy is this?

GUS

It's called Behavioral Shut the fuck up! Caroline?

Caroline turns a deadly gaze onto Rose;

CAROLINE

You've been sucking us dry for almost six years with this loan. Don't you think it's enough? Don't you think the fact it failed is difficult enough without having to endure a monthly reminder for six years?

ROSE

You're leaving now, what do you care? My son borrowed the money to open that ridiculous restaurant which I told you both would never work. You didn't listen. So....You can't borrow money and not pay it back.

CAROLINE

It would have worked if you
would have taken your tentacles
off of him.

LLOYD

Caroline, don't do this.

GUS

Lloyd! Caroline's turn.

ROSE

If you remember Caroline - my
husband had just died. I was
all alone and I had to have surgery.

CAROLINE

Elective surgery.

ROSE

It wasn't elective - it was necessary.

CAROLINE

She had to get the three sixes removed
from her scalp. Anything to keep
her son's attention on her. If you
really cared about your son, you would
have loaned him the money without
forcing him to move to Connecticut,
without forcing us to live in this
house

ROSE

How else would you have lived?
I let you stay in my home out of
the goodness of my heart -

CAROLINE

YOU CHARGED US RENT AND YOU TURNED
ME INTO A MAID. I never cleaned
my own apartment as much as I cleaned
for you.

ROSE

Well, that doesn't surprise me.

CONNIE

Really, I hardly think Mother
Rose is to be blamed for his failure.

CAROLINE

Connie, shut up and go make some

CAROLINE
fucking Rice Krispie squares O.K.!

CONNIE
WELL!

John silently cheers "All right"!

GARY
Now wait a minute here...we're
getting a little ugly.

CAROLINE
Getting ugly? This family is
repulsive.

MARY
(mumbles)
Amen.

CAROLINE
We walk around on tiptoes because
"mother might get upset",
or "mother might get angry"
And why? Let's be honest -
because she has money and she
holds it over all of us like a
death sentence.
(to Lloyd)
And you're the worst of all.
After three months and one
bad review in one lousy magazine,
and you quit. Coward.

Listening to this tirade, Lloyd is fuming. He asks Gus:

LLOYD
May I?

Gus lights another cigarette and figures;

GUS
Go for it.

LLOYD
(Caroline)
You should talk about honesty.
Putting aside for the moment the
fact that you're an adulterous slut,
let's address your talent for
rewriting history..
let's got back in time, shall we,

LLOYD

to that moment of "taking the loan from my mother". My first reaction was "Absolutely not".. I know my mother and I've been scarred enough thank you. But...YOU were the one you said we should consider taking it - not the "actual" taking, just the "Considering" - the actual taking was left to me -

(Indian voice)

BIG MAN DECISION! -

(little girl voice)

"You couldn't make up your mind"... "You didn't know what the right thing to do was" - BUT -

(angry)

You were sick and tired of living in a one bedroom apartment - so don't' give me that "it was the best of times" bullshit - you didn't want to work anymore, you didn't want to get any help with the baby because

(baby voice)

you wanted to do it all yourself and you hated New York because we weren't as rich as your college friends to enjoy it. But it was MY decision RIGHT!?

Caroline realizes how manipulative she must have been.

LLOYD

And let's get something straight. It wasn't just any magazine review - is was THE restaurant guidebook of New York and when THE restaurant guidebook of New York recommends us to Hindus looking for a fun night out of fasting, what did you expect me to do?

CAROLINE

It was too early. I begged you not to invite the critic.

LLOYD

It was the only night he could come.

CAROLINE

He shouldn't have come at all.
We were three months old. But you
had to...We had to start getting
people in, making money! You were
worried that we hadn't started
paying her back yet - you had to
make some kind of show for her
benefit. And you threw it all away!

Lloyd realize there is truth in what she says;

ROSE

He made the right decision:

LLOYD/CAROLINE

EAT ME!

Rose is truly stunned.

ROSE

Lloyd. How dare you! After all
I've sacrificed for you.

LLOYD

You know mom, you know what I'm
going to get you for next Christmas -
a big wooden cross. So everytime
you feel unappreciated for all
your sacrifices, you can climb
up and nail yourself to it.

John and Gus give each other a thumbs up.

ROSE

What kind of doctor are you?
What have you done to my son?

GUS

Uh....this...uh...this is all good.
It's uh...opening up a dialogue
with the Instant Child.

CAROLINE

Inner Child.

GUS

(correcting himself)
Inner Child..

ROSE

The only good that has come out

ROSE
of your interference is that fact
that they're finally getting divorced.

Caroline and Lloyd look at each other on this line. It is clear they love each other but neither will budge. Gus sees this and figures,

GUS
Ah, what the hell - I've got some
time to kill...Roll up my sleeves and
see what comes out...I have an
exercise for you two.

CAROLINE
Gus, forget it...It's over..

GUS
(Getting into it)
No, no...come on, give it a try...
Now close you eyes...
(she does)
now...um ask your Inner Child
to complete this sentence...uh
(Thinks, then:)
"What I want to fucking say to you is..."

Everyone is a little shocked at the language.

GUS
Say it to Lloyd...

CAROLINE
What I want to fucking say to you is
I've had it - I don't care about us
anymore. I want out.

GUS
Lloyd?

Lloyd stands and closes his eyes;

LLOYD
What I want to fucking say to you is...
(Everyone waits)
I can't think of anything.

CAROLINE
SEE! SEE! HE DOESN'T FEEL ANYTHING!
WHY AM I HERE! WHAT ARE WE DOING TOGETHER!

LLOYD

You just said you don't care either...

CAROLINE

Oh, so you say the same thing?
What are you, five?

LLOYD

Caroline, why don't you just
tell me what to say and I'll
memorize it...

Having heard this bickering before, Rose exits the living
room as THE ARGUING CONTINUES until;

GUS

STOP IT!

Rose stops. Gus rushes up the Lloyd and Caroline.

GUS

You two are so full of shit...
(to Lloyd)
"You can't think of anything"?
You are so pissed off man your pants
are wet...You're lucky enough
to have a wife and a kid and
you're tossing it off with both hands!

LLOYD

You're not supposed to have opinions.

GUS

SUE ME!
(To Caroline)
And you....

By this time, Rose has returned - curious about what's going on;

...."You don't care? You want out?"
Jesus, what are you both fucking idiots?
(to Lloyd)
She loves you but she's ashamed of
herself..
(to Caroline)
He loves you but he feels like a
failure. O.K...END OF STORY!

Caroline and Lloyd feel naked in front of each other suddenly.

GUS

Why can't you two just say

GUS

what you mean?

(To Caroline)

Tell him what you want to say,
Caroline...tell how when you drive
in front of the old restaurant
you remember how great you were together.

Caroline, on the verge of tears, admits;

CAROLINE

It was great.

LLOYD

But it failed. It's over.
You move on....

GUS

Bullshit!

LLOYD

O.K...I FEEL LIKE A FAILURE AND
I HATE IT AND I DON'T BLAME YOU
FOR HAVING AN AFFAIR - O.K! I
can't even support my wife and
my son! I live off my mother!
What do you want me to say?

CAROLINE

That you forgive me....
And I don't mean about the affair.
I mean about the loan. About
forcing you into something.
About putting it all on you.
Even the failure.

LLOYD

No, that part was mine.
I had no business running a business.

CAROLINE

But I didn't care...Don't you see?
We were on the same side.
If it didn't work, so we try something
else. But you didn't want to...I didn't
mind the dream not coming true...
I minded you never dreaming again.
And I minded you teaching our son
not to...That's why I'm such a push
over with him - I was just....compensating.
You've been so unhappy for so long.
And....and I didn't know how to

CAROLINE
help you. I thought I failed.
(cries)
I've been so lonely for you.
There's nothing worse than being
lonely for the person you're married
to...You get so...caught up
in the fighting - it's all about
what to say next, the next line,
the next comeback...and...I've
missed you so much.

Lloyd is overwhelmed by Caroline's confession.

LLOYD
I'm...I'm sorry about Jesse.
That's was unfair of me.
I guess he has good reason to hate me.

CAROLINE
You're wrong about him.
Don't you remember - when
he was little, you were the only
one he'd go to...You were the only
one who could make him stop crying.
And when you worked late, he'd
wouldn't eat dinner until
you came home...
(Lloyd is choking up)
He loves you Lloyd.

Lloyd doesn't know what to say. Gus helps him.

GUS
Go ahead Lloyd - say it.
(half-kidding)
Don't make me put a gun to your head.

Lloyd looks at Caroline and it is as if for the first time his
defenses are completely down.

LLOYD
I....I miss you too.

Weeping, Caroline wraps her arms around him..

THE DOORBELL RINGS;

Gus is startled. He rushes to the window and peeks out to see;

HUFF standing at the front door - He turns into C.U.;

GUS
MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Jesse falls out of the closet and into the room. He rushes to the door, listens then opens it only to hear HUFF downstairs;

HUFF (O.S.)
I'm sorry about disturbing you
during the holidays.

LLOYD (O.S.)
It's all right...Come into the kitchen.
What's the all about?

HUFF (O.S.)
Do you know a Col. Siskel, at your
son's academy...?

Jesse panics. He changes his mind about an escape.

INT. DEN - NIGHT.

In the den beyond the living room, GUS HOLDS ROSE, GARY AND THE FAMILY AS HOSTAGES as he listens at the door.

JOHN
This is amazing.

Connie goes to hit her son, then stops. She notices Gary watching her and she argues;

CONNIE
The only reason I discipline so
hard is because you're too weak
with them! I'm always the bad guy.

GARY
But Dr. Wong said -

CONNIE
HE'S NOT A DOCTOR!

GARY
Yeah, but he's good.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Caroline and Lloyd have just heard Siskel's story from Huff.

They are devastated.

HUFF

Now Col. Siskel is willing to not press charges. In fact, he doesn't want anybody else to know about this. As long as Jesse gives him the pictures and the negatives. He says he'll even forget about expelling him from the academy. May I get a glass of water?

Caroline nods, on the verge of tears. She looks to LLOYD who has regained his cool, detached self righteous aura.

Huff approaches the sink and runs some water under the tap. As he drinks, HE NOTICES THE BULLET HOLE IN THE WINDOW (Gus made when he started smoking again). He strikes him as odd. He places the glass down and notices DRIED BLOOD ON ONE OF THE COUNTER STOOLS (from Gus's dogbite). Something strikes him.

HUFF

You know, I picked up your son tonight. He said you never showed up at the station. Was that right?

CAROLINE

(preoccupied)
Yeah. I got held up...
(quickly changes it)
I mean, I got delayed..you know.

HUFF

Yeah. That's usually what it means.

His mind is clicking but he keeps it to himself.

LLOYD

I'll speak with my son. If he
(painful for him)
has the photos..I'll drive them
over to you tonight.

HUFF

Just call the station. They'll know where to find me. There's a curfew tonight...Police will be doing house-to-house searches looking for that jewel thief.

Huff watches to see if the Chassuer react. But they are so upset about Jesse, that they successfully appear uninvolved.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT.

Listening to Huff outside the kitchen door, Gus is convinced of something. He whispers to himself;

GUS

You know I'm here, don't you?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHASSEUR HOUSE - NIGHT.

Huff exits the house and hurries to his car. He gets in and pretends to drive away just as A POLICE CAR drives up to the neighbor's house and drops off GEORGE THE DRUNKEN SANTA. We hear a COP from inside the car.

COP (O.S.)

Now get yourself inside George.
There's a curfew on tonight.

SANTA

Eh! I'm Santa Claus - I don't
pay attention to no fucking curfew!

The cops drive off. Santa passes out in the snow.

CUT TO:

INT. CHASSEUR BEDROOM - NIGHT.

Gus has assembled everyone in the upstairs bedroom. Caroline sits on her bed, sad and detached. LLOYD asks Gus.

LLOYD

Could you let Jesse out. We
have to talk to him.

Gus approaches the closet with the key. He sticks the key in and the lock falls off...He opens the closet and Jesse's gone;

GUS

SHIT! Come on!

He motions for LLOYD to follow. They exit and lock the door behind them. Connie immediately runs to the nightstand;

CONNIE

There's no phone here!

CUT TO:

INT. JESSE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

The room is sparsely furnished; a bed, a desk, a lamp. But one entire side of it is occupied by a lot of video equipment. Jesse has removed the floorboard and is busy SHOVING HANDFULS OF CASH INTO SUITCASES....when he looks up to see his Dad standing next to Gus. The two exchange hurtful looks.

JESSE

What did you do Dad? Turn me in.

Lloyd doesn't know what to say. Gus intercedes;

GUS

You really did have money.

JESSE

Can I talk to Gus alone please?

GUS

Now, kid - I think this is between you and your dad.

JESSE

Take me with you! Please take me with you...

(This kills Lloyd)

I won't be any trouble. I swear.
I give you all the money. We
can make to the docks on foot.
I now a shortcut through side streets and-

GUS

Woah, woah...slow down....

Jesse is tearing up. He is frightened and confused. Gus smooths the kid's forehead.

GUS

Don't start running now kid.
You'll never stop.

He exits and leaves Lloyd alone with his son. Jesse lowers his head, waiting for his sentencing. But Lloyd asks gently;

LLOYD

Can I just ask you one question?
Is there something we don't give
you? Are there things you need
we don't know about? What did you
need all this money for? Drugs?

JESSE

No.

LLOYD

Video games? What? What is
so important that you'd
blackmail somebody to get it?
(sternly)

What is so damn important enough
to commit a crime for?

JESSE

Your family.

Lloyd is dumbstruck.

JESSE

I just thought...if you and mom
could pay off Grandma...You could
do what you want - you could
get out of here - you could...
stop fighting.

(Lloyd is frozen to the spot)
There aren't a lot ways to make
that kind of money fast. At least,
none that I'm as good at. I'm
good at this...Some people are
good at math - some people are
born doctors...I'm a criminal.
You've said as much yourself.

Lloyd feels his responsibility.

BRIEF CUT TO;

INT. DEN - SAME TIME.

Gus is tying up Rose while Gary and his brood wait on the couch
for their turn. Mary whispers to John;

MARY

This would make an incredible
Beverly Hills 90201 episode.

Rose refuses to let Gus scare her as he ties her to a chair;

ROSE

You'll never get away you know.
You'll either be captured or killed.
Good riddance I say.

(Gus tries not to pay attention)
One less worthless man around.

ROSE

One less burden on society.
And I'll be there to watch you
be put away - in either prison
or a plastic bag, I'll be there.

Gus stops and stares at her. Rose stares back. Gus wants to kill her but, remembering Jesse's words, TAKES BOTH HANDS AND MESSES HER HAIR. Rose, hating her hair being touched, is all a tither.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT.

Lloyd tries to find the words;

LLOYD

Jesse.... you are not a bad kid.
You're a smart kid. You're
a brave kid. You have - talents.
You're a little...lost is all.
You have to start to trying to
understand that...things aren't
so...black and white.
Good people do bad things, bad
people do good things...We're
human. But we all deserve forgiveness.
Everybody deserves another chance. Even me.
Jesse you've got so much time ahead
of you. And you can do anything
you want with it - make anything
happen with it...And if I taught you
anything less than that - I'm sorry.

Jesse is amazed by his father's understanding.

SUDDENLY, THERE IS A BANGING AT THE FRONT DOOR. WE HEAR;

SANTA (O.S.)

MERRY CHRISTMAS!....YO!

INT. FOYER - NIGHT.

Gus rushes downstairs to find George letting himself in.

SANTA

Merry Christmas - Merry Christmas...
(sees an empty dining room)
Oh - did you people eat already?
Where is every-....?

Santa sees Gus on the stairs pointing a gun at him.

SANTA
Who the hell are you?

GUS
Just calm down...

SANTA
Eh! Buddy! Didn't any body ever tell
you not to point a fucking gun at
Santa Claus?

Santa pulls off his cap and charges;

SANTA
AAAHHHHH!

GUS
Oh shit!

SANTA CHARGES, HITTING GUS IN THE GUT WITH HIS HEAD. THE GUN
GETS KNOCKED OUT OF GUS'S HAND AND THE TWO START FISTFIGHTING
IN THE HALLWAY. The hall clock READS 12:25.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHASSUER NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT.

Police cars and vans drive up and park. Teams of house
searchers composed of local police and Warren's state troopers
begin flooding several houses at a time to search for Gus.

HUFF SITS IN HIS CAR, further down the darkened street, watching
when he sees;

EXT. CHASSUER HOUSE - NIGHT.

THE GARAGE DOOR OPENS and A ACURA pulls out down the drive.
The car pulls into the street and heads down the road, toward
the search parties....Huff follows slowly, without headlights.

EXT. SEARCH PARTY ROADBLOCK - NIGHT.

A State Trooper flags down Lloyd's car. Lloyd rolls down the
window.

TROOPER
Excuse me sir, but are you aware
that there's a curfew?

LLOYD
Yes I know, I'm sorry but...my
son is sick...

Trooper leans in and sees JESSE laying in the backseat with his head on Caroline's lap.

LLOYD
I was just taking him to the
emergency room.

TROOPER
May I see some identification please?

Caroline looks out the window and spots STEVE. She rolls it down and shouts;

CAROLINE
STEVE!...STEVE, IT'S CAROLINE.

Steve comes over smiling.

STEVE
Caroline, hey, what's up?

CAROLINE
Jesse's sick and we have to get him
to the emergency room...I think it's
food poisoning.

TROOPER
You know these people Sargent?

STEVE
Yeah, they're fine. Let'em go!

The Acura drives through the roadblock. Huff follows.

INT. ACURA - NIGHT.

JESSE
So far so good.

CAROLINE
You think there's enough air in the trunk?

LLOYD
He'll be fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

The Acura drives on. Huff's car keeps up from behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

The Acura makes a right onto HARBOR STREET.

INT. HUFF'S CAR - NIGHT

Huff smiles to himself.

HUFF

The harbor.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

The two cars continue down Harbor Street until, to Huff's surprise, the Acura makes a left at a sign that reads RT; 102.

INT. HUFF CAR - NIGHT.

HUFF

What?

Huff decides to make his presence known. He puts a siren on his roof and speeds up.

INT. ACURA - NIGHT

The Chasseurs panic.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

The Acura slows to a stop. Huff's car pulls up behind it. Huff gets out and approaches Lloyd's window.

HUFF

Mr. Chasseur...May I ask where you are going?

LLOYD

Well, we had a long talk with Jesse and decided that the sooner we put all this behind us the better. So, we're driving out to the academy to get those items for Col. Siskel.

HUFF

Well I'm sure he'll appreciate that but...you shouldn't be out here during the curfew.

CAROLINE

We know but...we have some personal friends on the police force

CAROLINE
(Huff hates hearing "Personal friends")
and they let us through.

Jesse stares at Huff. Huff stares back and decides.

HUFF
Can I ask you to please step out
Mr. Chassuer and open the trunk.

JESSE
NO!

LLOYD
Jesse!

Lloyd gets out and escorts Huff to the trunk. As LLOYD puts
the key in, he apologizes;

LLOYD
This is...so embarrassing.

Huff waits for his big moment. He pulls his gun. Lloyd opens
the trunk and reveals;

DRUNKEN GEORGE, sans his Santa suit, asleep in the trunk.
Huff is speechless.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHASSUER NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT.

The search teams are moving to the next house when TWO
POLICEMEN bump into A DRUNK SANTA;

"SANTA"
"II...SAW MOMMY HUMMING SAAAAANTA CLAUSE."
(THE COPS GRAB HIM)
Hey..Hey what the hell are you doing?

PHIL runs up to them and explains;;

PHIL
Guys guys...this is George Lindsey.
He lives a block down. Let him go.
(The cops let him go and move on)
Ha! George - will you get yourself home!

Phil moves on and "SANTA" is left alone, beyond the search teams.
GUS LOOKS OUT FROM BENEATH HIS BEARD AND CAP, THEN CONTINUES
A BIT MORE BRISKLY DOWN THE STREET.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Huff has the entire Chasseur family out of the car;

LLOYD

I told you - he passed out in
my living room. I couldn't leave
him there alone.

HUFF

Why is he in the trunk?

LLOYD

This is a 34,000 dollar car.
You know how hard it is to get
the smell of vomit out of car leather.

HUFF

You people are hiding something.
You people are in this up to
your neck and I've had it with
these bullshit stories! Now I
don't know why you're protecting
him but if he's got a family
member or some hostage, we can
take care of that. But I have to
know where he's going?

JESSE

(smart alecky, pointing to George)
How do you know he's not Gus?

Everyone except Jesse realizes the mistake he's made.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT.

Gus runs to the docks, searching the boats for Murray until;

MURRAY (O.S.)

Kid..KID! Over here.

Gus turns around to see;

THE DINKIEST, MOST FRAGILE LOOKING BUNCH OF STICKS THAT ANYBODY
EVER DARED CALLED A BOAT. It is lined with Christmas lights
making it look like a giant tree ornament.

GUS

You got to be shitting me.

Murray is completely shitfaced, as is Linda.

MURRAY

Gus..this is Linda. Linda, Gus.

LINDA

So very special to meet you.

GUS

You gotta be shitting me.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Huff is at his wits end;

HUFF

All right - no more playing.
This is the deal - either you tell
me where he is....or Siskel or
no Siskel, I'm making sure Jesse
here makes the front page and have
Siskel and the photographs subpoenaed.

JESSE

No. He's bluffing. Don't do it!

Frightened, Lloyd and Caroline look to each other for guidance.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT.

Murray's car trunk is open and emptied. Linda and Murray are
sitting in the back drinking the last of the whiskey as Gus
runs around in his Santa suit preparing to shove off...He turns
the ignition key. Miraculously, IT STARTS.

GUS

There is a God.

He begins to move out of the dock. He backs the boat up and
moves past the other anchored boats. Once clear, he begins to
turn the boat's nose out, so that it faces the ocean - WHEN;

CAROLINE/LLOYD (O.S.)

GUSS...GUSSS...WAAIIITTT!!

Gus turns to see Caroline, Lloyd, Jesse and Huff standing on the docks.

GUS

Oh no.

Lloyd runs down the dock as Huff stays behind with Caroline and Jessie...The boat is several yards into the water, but Lloyd can manage to speak and be heard from the edge of the dock.

LLOYD

Gus wait..please...

GUS

Lloyd what are you doing - who is that?

LLOYD

It's Huff?

GUS

WHAT!

LLOYD

WAIT! He's got Jesse. That money of Jesse's, Huff knows how he got it and he's going to make it tough for him.

(Gus feels badly)

But he says he'll let him go if...

GUS

(knows what's coming)

If what?

Lloyd doesn't have to answer; Gus, in his Santa suit, explodes;

GUS

SHIT! SHIT! THIS SUCKS! I'M...I'M
OUTTA HERE..I'M ON A BOAT...I..SHIT!

He kicks the boat and hurts his foot! Murray and Linda watch with drunken fascination.

LLOYD

Gus...I know it's a lot to ask.
But there's still a chance for Jess.
And right now, for whatever reason,
you're the only one who can give it
to him.

Gus knows he's right - but he's still pissed. He looks to Murray and Linda, and decides;

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT.

Jesse sees the boat coming back into the dock and screams;

JESSE

NO!...GUS....DON'T DO IT!

But the boat keeps on coming in, with Gus at the front. He and Huff keep their eyes fixed on one another until the boat stops.

Lloyd rejoins his family. Caroline is crying. Jesse breaks free and runs to the boat.

JESSE

What are you nuts?

GUS

Shut up and help me outta here.

Jesse takes Gus' hand and helps him hop onto the dock.

JESSE

You could have gotten away.

Caroline, Lloyd and Huff approach the scene.

GUS

Yeah well...don't say nobody ever gave you nothing.

Overcome, Jesse hugs him. Gus is made uncomfortable by this - even though he likes it. He pulls Jesse away.

GUS

Come on...cut it out.

CAROLINE

Gus...

GUS

Don't even start!

CAROLINE

I just wanted to say thank you.
I think heaven's a sure thing now.

She and Gus exchange a silent understanding. Huff steps forward and faces Gus.

HUFF

It's been a long time.

GUS

Not long enough. Any chance I can just give the jewelry back and you let me go. Fucking Spirit of Christmas and all...

HUFF

Nah...It's not up to me. These townies want your blood - everything else is insured. Besides, you and me have a score to settle.

He bangs his leg. Gus, not knowing what he means, says casually;

GUS

What?

HUFF

What do you mean, what!? THIS!

GUS

Yeah, you got a fake leg - SO?

HUFF

SO!? You're the one who gave me this leg! You're the reason my whole life got sidetracked into the dump!

GUS

Excuse me? You fell - wasn't my fault.

HUFF

FELL? You pull the cardboard out from under my legs and I fell! Four stories!

GUS

Talk about rewriting history!

(to Huff)

I didn't pull that piece of cardboard, you slipped!

HUFF

SLIPPED!

GUS

It was raining! You had me in a headlock and you reached FOR YOUR HANDCUFFS AND YOU FUCKING SLIPPED. Get a grip.

Huff is about to reply when he realizes Gus is right.

HUFF

Really?

GUS

Listen, can you at least let him go -
(referring to Murray)
Nobody knows about him - let him go.

HUFF

(in his own world)
I slipped?

Murray steps off the boat, inspired by Gus.

MURRAY

NO, I'm coming with you Gus.
It's only right!

LINDA

(so proud)
Oh Murray!

MURRAY

I was never cut out for this kid.
I've never been any good at it.
Maybe this'll be a clean start.
You done a good thing for this kid,
Gus, and you're gonna be paid back,
I'm telling ya...
(to Huff)
But before we go I have one request.

Everyone waits for the request as Murray helps Linda off the boat.

MURRAY

Marry me Linda - make an honest
man outta me!

LINDA

Oh Murr...
(They kiss)

GUS

Do you believe this?

MURRAY

Before I go do my time, will
you marry us Captain Huff?

HUFF
It's Lt. Huff and get the
hell outta here!

CUT TO:

INT. HUFF CAR - NIGHT.

Murray and Linda are in the backseat with their arms around each other. Gus and Murray are in the front.

GUS
Well - I guess you're gonna
be the local hero for a while, huh?
They'll make speeches about you.
Put you on the news. Maybe even
give you a gift membership to the
Country Club, huh?

Something about this vision disturbs Huff.

GUS
You play golf?

HUFF
No. I always meant to take it up though.

GUS
Good game. I took it up when I
was in Tahiti. You'll like it.
Especially with all your country
club buddies - trading stock tips
and drinking Stoly Cristal!
Everyone'll be stepping over each
other to call themselves "a close
personal friend of Ben Huff's"
(phony, snooty voice)
"Hi there - Ben Huff here...hi there!"
Fucking shit.

Huff is considering the future Gus has laid out - and we can
tell he's not too thrilled.

CUT TO:

ONE YEAR LATER - CHRISTMAS....

INT. A DIFFERENT CHASSEUR HOUSE - DAY.

A MODEST HOUSE, smaller less fancy than Lloyd's mother's.
An older Jesse is unwrapping a UPS PACKAGE as CAROLINE AND LLOYD
ARGUE O.S. upstairs;

CAROLINE
I'M SICK OF BEING CRITICIZED FOR
WANTING VARIETY IN MY LIFE

LLOYD
WELL EXCUSE ME - BUT HAVING BUFFALO
MEAT AND MAIZE ISN'T EXACTLY MY IDEA
OF AN APPETIZING CHRISTMAS DINNER

CAROLINE
OUR NATIVE AMERICAN BROTHERS THINK IT IS.

LLOYD
HONEY - INDIANS DON'T HAVE CHRISTMAS!
JESUS WAS JEWISH - HE WASN'T NAVAJO!

THE ARGUING CONTINUES O.S. AS; Jesse opens the package to reveal
a PHOTO of GUS with TWO OLDER PEOPLE - HIS PARENTS; A LETTER
ATTACHED READS;

GUS (V.O.)
I found my parents. They came to
visit me - They argued the whole time.
I couldn't wait til they fucking left.

Jesse smiles, knowing what he means as his parents argue O.S.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ISLAND PARADISE - DAY.

C.U. of a GOLF BALL being hit off a tee. Camera Pans Up to find;
GUS and HUFF in golf attire, enjoying a game. The environment
looks very much like the picture Huff had up on his wall, in
his first scene.

HUFF
That's a bogey.

GUS
Bogey my ass! You couldn't hit a
bogey with two good legs and mulligan!

HUFF
DID I ASK FOR A MULLIGAN! DID I?

THEY START ARGUING LIKE AN OLD MARRIED COUPLE AS;
END CREDITS ROLL.